

Last stop before WWII p. 66 **Kentucky weekend, 1975** p. 32

Classic Trains

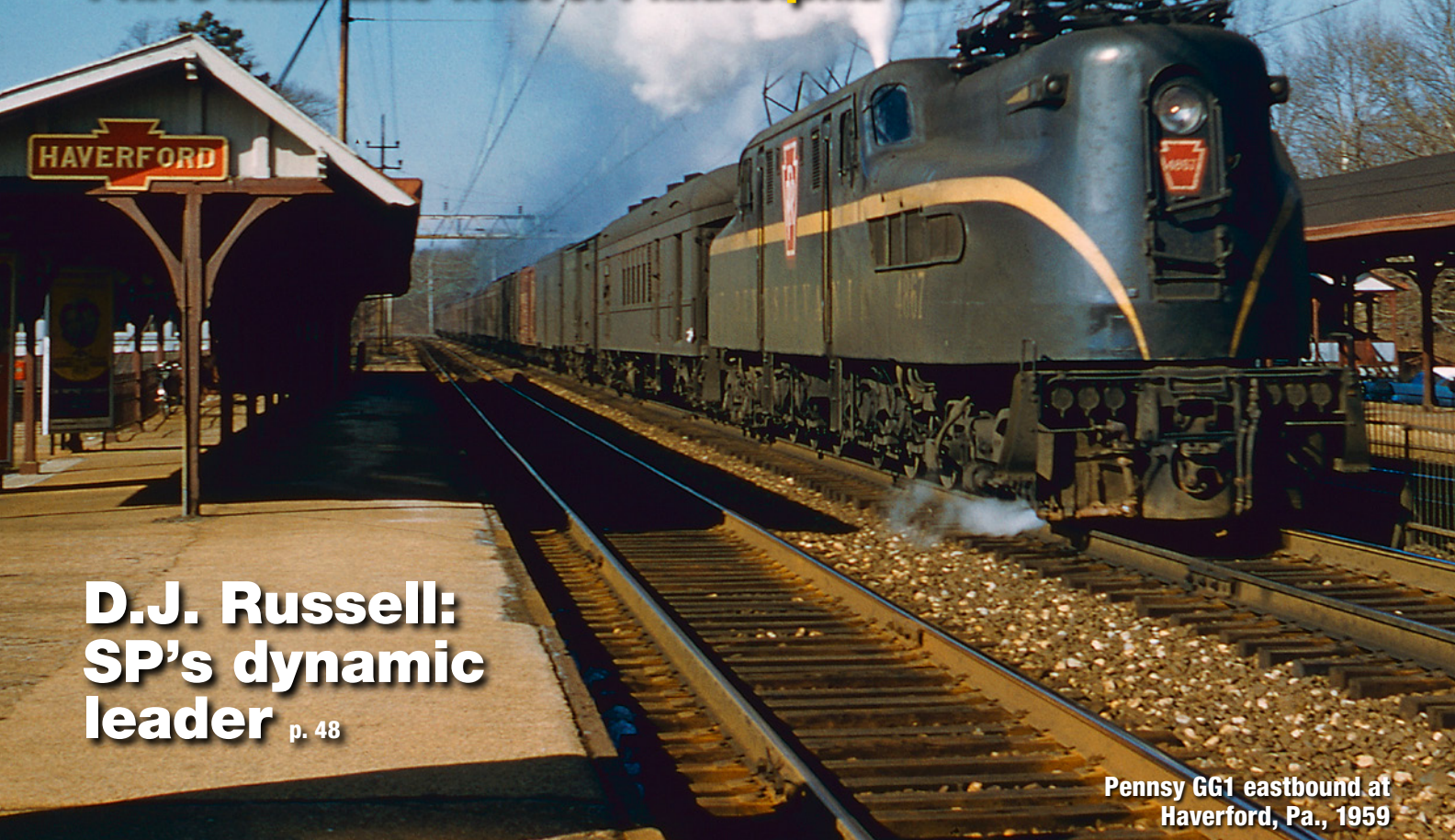
Fall 2015

THE GOLDEN YEARS OF RAILROADING

15
YEARS
2000-2015

100 years under wire

PRR's Main Line west of Philadelphia p. 20



D.J. Russell:
SP's dynamic
leader p. 48

Pennsy GG1 eastbound at
Haverford, Pa., 1959

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PLUS

Last of steam on GTW and IC p. 38

C&O's backwoods Budds p. 68 **Erie Railroad** p. 16

Rio Grande's Denver shops from the air p. 46

BONUS
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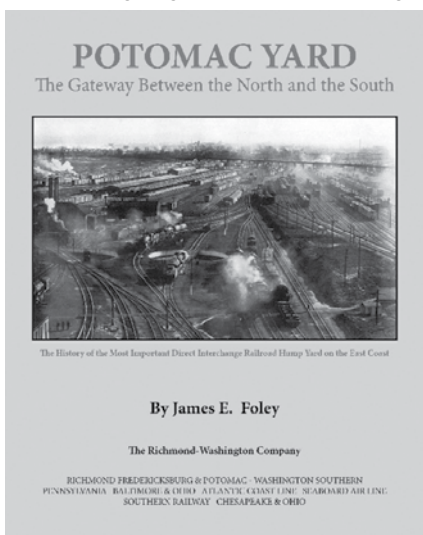
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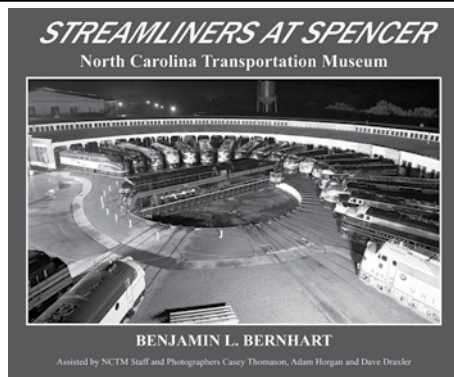
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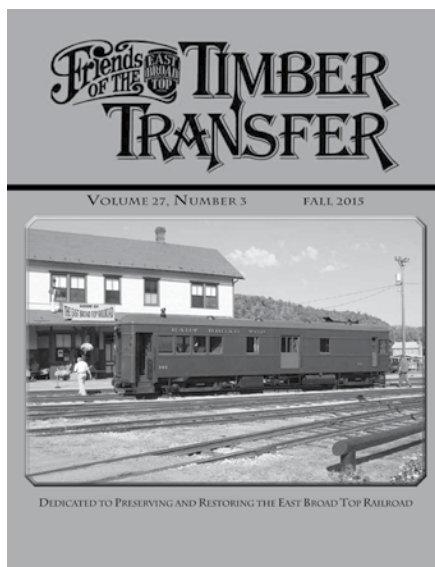
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WELCOME

Main Line memories



This issue's cover story by Frank Tatnall about the first segment of the Pennsylvania Railroad's network of 11,000-volt A.C. electrified lines has special significance for me. As a Philadelphia native, I developed an early affection for PRR's multi-tracked, catenary-crowned main lines. Both my parents, despite having no particular railroad interest, nourished my obsession. Although we lived closer to Reading Company lines, my dad knew the big show was at PRR points like North Philadelphia and Overbrook, and we spent time at both stations.

In the mid-1960s, his parents, along with two of his aunts, moved to a duplex on a short lane that ended at the PRR right of way adjacent to Haverford station on the Main Line. Our family visits to these relatives would begin with a stop at the station, hoping we'd see something other than a Paoli Local multiple-unit train, and would be interrupted by dashes to trackside when freight trains came within earshot.

Later I'd go on my own, riding into Reading Terminal, walking across center city to Suburban Station, and catching a rush-hour train of MP54s out to Haverford for an evening, night, and day (or two) of train-watching from a window in the living room of my indulgent but bemused great aunts. The diversity of traffic — highlighted by long-haul passenger trains and heavy, helper-assisted freights — was captivating.

Now I live far from Haverford; my grandparents and great aunts are gone; and GG1s and E44s no longer lead big trains up and down the Main Line. But Haverford will always occupy a treasured place in my memories, just as those 20 miles between Philadelphia and Paoli — the nucleus of the Pennsylvania's electric empire, now 100 years old — occupies a special place in railroad history.

Robert S. McGonigal
 Editor



MP54 multiple-unit cars move toward the late-afternoon sun at Narberth, on the Main Line west of Philadelphia, in 1961. This first segment of PRR's electric empire is now 100 years old.

Frank Tatnall

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Classic Trains

THE GOLDEN YEARS OF RAILROADING

15
YEARS
2000-2015

Fall 2015
Volume 16 Number 3



FEATURE ARTICLES

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Riding the route, then behind a BL2 on a fall 1975 Louisville, Ky., excursion
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On the cover: With its train-heating boiler blowing off steam, Pennsylvania GG1 No. 4867 barrels through Haverford, Pa., 9 miles west of center city Philadelphia on the Main Line, with the Chicago–New York *Admiral* on January 31, 1959, in a Frank Tatnall photo (see page 20).

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Backwoods Budds into "America's coal bin"

Christopher Ahrens ["Rio Grande's Burnham Shops," page 46], a machinist by trade and a Colorado native, had a long railroad career as a master mechanic and in other management positions, and as a locomotive engineer. Employers included D&RGW (at Burnham Shops and in Salt Lake City), Green Mountain, Boston & Maine, Burlington Northern, Steamtown Foundation (Vermont), and Steamtown National Historic Site (Scranton, Pa.). This is his first CLASSIC TRAINS byline. Chris is an old acquaintance of **Hol Wagner**, a Burlington Route authority and longtime Denver-area resident who wrote about the end of Colorado & Southern steam in our Fall 2002 issue.

Charles Buccola ["Classics Today," page 76] is a retired purchasing manager. A Louisville native, he has had a lifelong interest in railroading, particularly in the Appalachian area. A Kentucky Railway Museum volunteer since 2003, he now serves as Board Chairman. He also volunteers to assist with research at the University of Louisville Archive's L&N collection. This is his first byline with us.

Larry K. Fellure ["C&O's Big Sandy Budds," page 68], who grew up in Huntington, W.Va., is a retired train dispatcher. His C&O RDC rides took place soon after his 1960 visits to Williamson, W.Va., that formed the basis of his previous story with us, "Final Weeks of N&W Steam" [Spring 2008]. Larry began railroading in July 1960 in Huntington as a clerk in C&O's division superintendent's office. He worked clerical positions in Huntington and Baltimore for 18 years, later overseeing various territories for Chessie System and successors from offices in Huntington and Jacksonville, Fla. He retired in 2004, later moving to the Orlando area to be with family. In 2005 he began working on the Walt Disney World steam railroad, where he is a locomotive engineer.

Fred Furminger ["Just Before the End," page 38] retired in 2000 from a career as an advertising sales executive. He has worked with a firm cleaning up train derailments and as an engineer and conductor/brakeman on western New York short lines. For 21 years, Fred owned a track-maintenance motor car, which he

ran more than 44,000 miles throughout North America. This is his third story in CLASSIC TRAINS, following pieces on NYC steam [Winter 2008] and photographer Harold K. Vollrath [Fall 2011].

Bill Graper ["Last Stop Before World War II," page 66] recently retired from a 43-year career in economic development, holding positions with New York State before becoming the East Coast representative for the Kansas Department of Commerce. Two of his favorite successful projects were rail-dependent: a brewery in central New York and a candy plant in Topeka. Bill grew up in an NYC family in Schenectady and holds a B.A. degree from Middlebury College and an M.A. from the University of Vermont, both in geography. His one previous CLASSIC TRAINS byline was in Fall 2010.

J. David Ingles ["Monon Moments," page 32], Senior Editor of CLASSIC TRAINS since its inception, has written something in nearly every issue, and in each one since Winter 2011 under the "Ingles Color Classics" label.

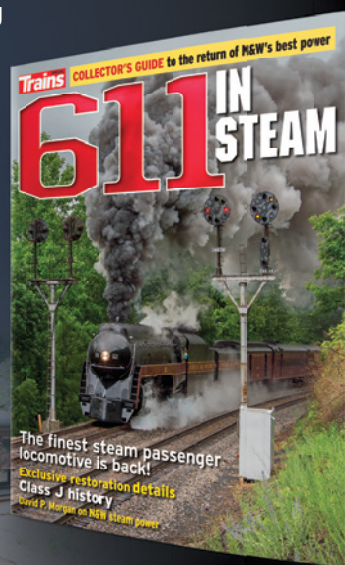
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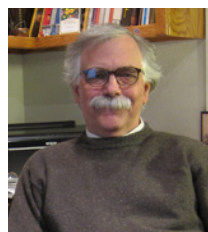
611 In Steam will arrive in early August 2015. Sales tax where applicable.

Robert E. Mohowski ["The Work of the Age," page 16], upon retiring from a 34-year career in public education in New Jersey, relocated with his wife Pat to the Saratoga Springs, N.Y., area. A prolific author, Bob has written two books on the New York, Ontario & Western; a history of the New York, Susquehanna & Western; and many magazine articles. Among his previous *CLASSIC TRAINS* bylines, dating from 2006, are a feature on Seatriain in Spring '11 and "Fallen Flags Remembered" entries on Lehigh & New England, Lehigh & Hudson River, and Lehigh Valley. He thanks Dan Biernacki, Mike Caramanna, and Dennis Yachechak for help with this Erie article.

Jerry A. Pinkepank ["Virginian Train 4 at Roanoke," page 58] had a long career as an officer for NYC, CB&Q, BN, and Soo and, since 1989, has been a Seattle-based rail consultant. He is the principal contributor to our "What's in a Photograph?" series, which began in Spring '14.

John R. Signor ["Donald J. Russell," page 48] worked as a conductor for SP for

nearly 20 years, but pursued a dual career as a freelance artist and designer; his clients included Amtrak, SP, Santa Fe, and Union Pacific. John has authored 13 books on western rail history, and his aerial-perspective maps have appeared in many publications. John, who lives with his wife Julie in Dunsmuir, Calif., is editor of the quarterly magazines of both the Santa Fe and SP historical societies. This is his first byline in *CLASSIC TRAINS*.



Frank Tatnall ["A Century of Catenary," page 20] was with PRR, PC, and Conrail in marketing and sales for 38 years, the last 20 as a manager at their Philadelphia headquarters. He took early retirement in 1990, having also worked in Louisville, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Baltimore, Cincinnati, and Columbus. Active in NRHS for decades and a color-slide photographer since 1955, Frank, who lives with his wife Mary in Radnor, Pa., on the Main Line,

has had two *CLASSIC TRAINS* bylines, in Winter 2011 (RI in Kansas City) and Summer '14 (Kentucky Derby specials).

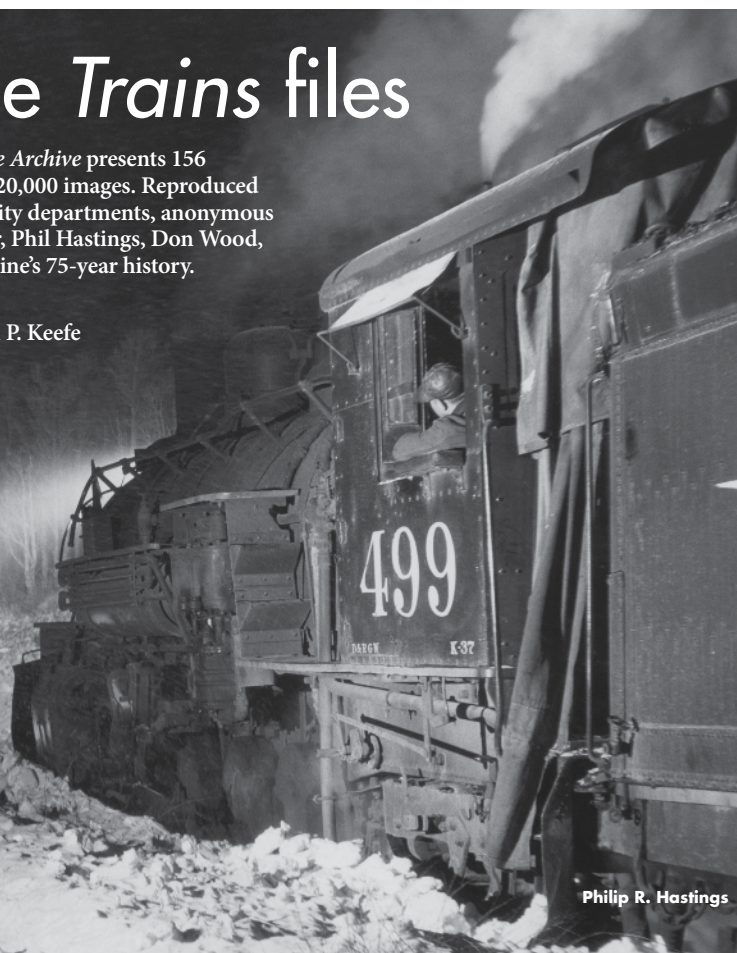
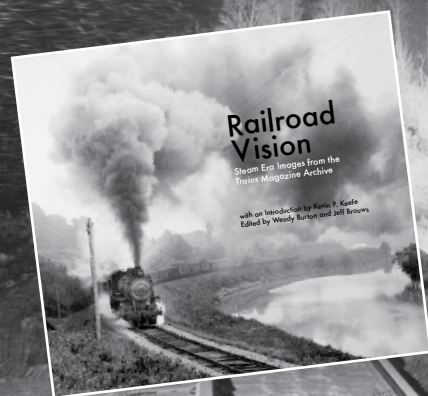
Russell Tedder ["Bridgeboro Boogie," page 60] retired in 1997 after a 46-year career in the shortline industry, last as director of corporate rail services and president of Georgia-Pacific Corp.'s lines. (His book on them is forthcoming.) A Florida native, he intended to major in agriculture at the University of Florida, but a summer job offer sent him railroading instead, as a clerk at the Live Oak, Perry & Gulf/South Georgia joint depot at Perry, Fla. At age 19, he became a train dispatcher for the 139-mile system. He returned to that job for six more years after serving in the Army at Fort Eustis, Va., and in Germany, then earned a Bachelor's degree at Florida State University. He eventually was affiliated with 13 short lines, leading 11 including 3 he started up, and was a longtime official in the American Shortline Railroad Association. Russell, now 80, lives with his wife Carolyn in Little Rock, Ark. This is his first story in *CLASSIC TRAINS*. ■

Treasures from the *Trains* files

Railroad Vision: Steam Era Images from the Trains Magazine Archive presents 156 photographs from the magazine's collection of more than 120,000 images. Reproduced in rich duotone, the pictures are the work of railroad publicity departments, anonymous photographers, and great lensmen like Richard Steinheimer, Phil Hastings, Don Wood, Jim Shaughnessy, and other familiar names from the magazine's 75-year history.

Edited by Wendy Burton and Jeff Brouws
With extended captions and an introductory essay by Kevin P. Keefe

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Philip R. Hastings

Return of a monarch

Class J No. 611, the queen of N&W steam, is back on her throne



Norfolk & Western class J No. 611, queen of the Norfolk Southern excursion program from its restoration in 1982 until the program's demise in 1994, is back in action. Owned by Virginia Museum of Transportation in Roanoke, the 4-8-4 was restored at North Carolina Transportation Museum during 2014–15 to star in NS's 21st Century Steam program. Here the J storms through Shawsville, Va., on one of six trips out of Roanoke during July 3–5.

Robert S. McGonigal

Celebrating 611

Read about N&W's most famous 4-8-4 in **611 IN STEAM**, a special publication from *TRAINS* magazine. On sale now, it covers the development and history of the J class, No. 611's restorations in 1982 and 2015, and more. A companion DVD will be available in October.



15 years of CLASSIC TRAINS

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Bob Milner

Big day at Galesburg

The *California Zephyr* gets plenty of attention on its maiden run

All eyes are on the shiny new *California Zephyr*, stopped at Galesburg, Ill., 162 miles into its inaugural Chicago–Oakland run on March 20, 1949. As the fireman climbs down from Burlington F3 9961-C, a man at right brings up a hose to water the diesels' train-heating boilers, the diner crew of the eastbound *Coloradan* looks on, and, beside the F units, future CB&Q President Harry C. Murphy greets the engineer and the Galesburg Division superintendent and his wife. For the doodlebug to Quincy, Ill., at left, it's business as usual on this historic day.



Pierre M. Ditto

Tight squeeze for two D&H 4-6-6-4s

Delaware & Hudson's 40 4-6-6-4s (Alco, 1940–46) were lengthy machines — especially so for a road whose top road-freight power through the 1930s had been of the far more compact 2-8-0 type. Thus, clearance measurements were of paramount importance when the Challengers arrived. Scrutinized by no fewer than six men, D&H 1519 and 1516 ease past each other on the curved tracks at the old Saratoga Springs, N.Y., station (since bypassed by a line to the west) in September 1945.



Roy Blanchard

Beauty and a beast

But which is which? New York Central P-2 third-rail motor 238 pilots the low-slug Baldwin diesel-hydraulic on the *Xplorer* train down the Hudson River en route to display at Grand Central Terminal, where only electrics were allowed, in mid-1956. The *Xplorer* soon fizzled, but some of the 1929-built P-2s made it to Penn Central.

Obituary

Joe Collias

St. Louis-area photographer and author Joe Collias, 87, died April 30. His photos were widely published, and he authored several books on steam and St. Louis railroads. Collias had two stories in *CLASSIC TRAINS*, in Fall 2010 and Winter 2014.

ON THE WEB

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New! Editor's blog

In "A Classic State of Mind," Editor Rob McGonigal writes about railroad history as it relates to current events, like the tragic Amtrak derailment at Philadelphia in May.

PRR's catenary empire

View photos and other material related to the Pennsylvania Railroad's network of electrified lines that had its start 100 years ago this September.



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“Flying” to Florida

What a wonderful package your Summer 2015 issue is! Mike Schafer’s “Fast Ride to Florida” [page 40] and his annoying Mr. Hult with his independent activities brought to mind a similar experience. In early spring 1945 my 8th grade class at New York City’s Columbia Grammar School had a two- or three-day trip to Washington, visiting all the popular patriotic sites. One chartered bus was used between Union Station and our hotel on 14th Street, with the 14th Street streetcar line right at the door.

None of our planned activities included a streetcar ride, but seeing so many PCCs, a few deck-roof double-enders, and some double-truck Birneys whetted my desire to ride. So when Mr. Contini, my homeroom and math teacher, said we should be ready to board the bus at our hotel at 10 a.m., a plan formed in my mind. I awoke before 7, packed my bags, ate, and took a long ride. I left at 8:15 and planned to return by 9:45. Approaching the hotel around 9:40, I saw all my classmates on the sidewalk and a red-faced Mr. Contini talking to my roommate, Victor Noder, so I knew I was in for a tongue-lashing, which I got.

David Lloyd Klepper, Jerusalem, Israel

I believe that the “Haleyville Trestle” mentioned [page 46] as the highest on Illinois Central was actually the Brushy Creek Trestle, between Hackleburg and Bear Creek, Ala., which the train would have crossed before Haleyville. At 187 feet, it was the “highest on the system.” After Norfolk Southern bought the IC line from Haleyville to Fulton, Ky., in 1988, operations over the Haleyville–Red Bay portion, including the trestle, ended. The line was abandoned in 1992, but the trestle remained standing until autumn 1996, after a trespasser on an ATV was hurt in a 1993 fall from it.

Dakota Baker, Cullman, Ala.

Disabled 2-8-4 captured twice

As a teenager living in Erie, Pa., I was fortunate to have nearly three years in the late 1950s to watch and photograph Nickel Plate Road steam. No surprise, then, that Jim Shaughnessy’s “Nickel Plated Glory” [page 20] was of special interest. The photo on page 27, showing a 2-8-4 back in the train heading for Conneaut for repairs, really hit home. I captured the same train — verified by comparing freight cars — on an 8mm movie



Gray 1950 CPA20-5 2005, one of eight (LIRR had four similar 1951 FM 2,400 h.p. cabs), has a large “shadowed” nose number as it nears Bethpage on a westbound in 1954. On RS1 463 (left), LIRR put big numerals on a metal frame over the radiator shutters!

Above, Jules Krzenski; left, Jim Shaughnessy

as it entered Dean siding on Erie’s east side. Smoke and steam obscure the road number of the lame 2-8-4, but what was obvious was the missing eccentric rod on the fireman’s side. I found out later that the failure occurred near Angola, N.Y.

Jim Scott, Girard, Pa.

PRR’s McMyler coal dumpers

Here is a special thanks to Bill Nesbitt for taking us on an insider’s look at his McMyler coal dumper in “First Day on the Job: South Amboy,” in “The Way It Was” [page 84]. As a kid from Brooklyn, I visited South Amboy in the 1950s with a box camera to photograph my beloved Pennsy’s K4 Pacifics, usually gritty, making their last stand on the New York & Long Branch. I hardly noticed the McMyler Dumper working nearby. As I became more interested in railroading, I learned about these fascinating machines. Besides the PRR unit, Reading Co., had two, one at Port Richmond in Philadelphia and one at Port Reading near Carteret, N.J. Jersey Central had “Big Moe” at Jersey City, almost behind the Statue of Liberty, and there may have been others on the Great Lakes.

Paul Kutta, West Chester, Pa.

About those big numbers

I found the “lost” Amtrak GG1 color scheme in Denny Hamilton’s “Amtrak’s GG1 That Might Have Been” [page 28] intriguingly attractive. The big numbers were an integral part of the graphic styl-

ing. The Long Island Rail Road did something like that years ago on its Fairbanks-Morse C-Liner and other locomotives (above and left). The proposed Amtrak design would have been something to see — that design diagram was a great find.

Jim Jones, Jefferson City, Mo.

An M&StL discovery in Iowa

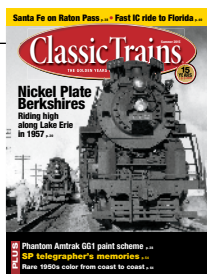
Bob Milner’s photo of Minneapolis & St. Louis 2-8-0 No. 451 on page 66 in the nice salon of “Coast to Coast With Bob Milner” really got my attention. Wandering across Iowa by car last summer, I came upon sister 457 in Mason City, where a dedicated group has done a fantastic job of preserving her in East Park.

Bill Coffey, North Hampton, N.H.

Penn Central’s last FAs

I really liked J. R. Morton’s “The Last FA” in the Summer 2015’s “The Way It Was” [page 79] about his experience with Penn Central 1302. It may have been the last former New York Central FA to run in regular service, but several ex-New Haven FA and FB units outlasted it on PC’s roster. New Haven had 50 B-B Alco cabs: 30 FA1s, 15 FB1s, and 5 FB2s. Four FA1s, three FB1s, and all five FB2s remained on the NH roster at the PC takeover on January 1, 1969, although only seven received PC numbers, according to J. W. Swanberg’s book, *New Haven Power*.

His book notes that five former NH FA and FB units were not retired until 1971, later than the last ex-NYC FA of Morton’s experience. Two NH FA1s, one FB1, and one FB2 actually received Penn Central black paint and white lettering



and/or emblems, and PC continued to run an amazing Alco A-B-B-A set on a nightly freight out of Boston well into 1969.

Also worthy of note is that NYC 1302 is still with us. After being retired by PC, it was rebuilt as Long Island "Power Pack" cab-control/head-end-power car 600 and led LIRR trains until 1985. The unit is owned by the Western New York Railway Historical Society, whose website states it is "stored awaiting restoration in South Buffalo, N.Y."

Scott A. Hartley, East Windsor, Conn.

Nimble telegraph operators

As a middle-management railroader in the mid-1960s, I had occasions to sit in on telegraphers' shifts, so I can thoroughly appreciate the late R. David Read's Southern Pacific telegrapher story, "When Trains Ran Late . . ." [page 54], and recognize the agility of those operators. The coordination of operating people was extraordinary, and the split-second thinking of all involved was paramount to a smooth and safe operation. Rubik's Cube — move over!

Incidentally, on some railroads, "O.S.-ing" can mean "on the sheet," i.e., the operator's noting on a large dispatcher's sheet the time and identification of a train passing his location. Those sheets could be 6 feet long on a busy division!

Ted Shradly, Orleans, Mass.

Timetable confusion

I am enjoying your Summer issue as always, but I need to mention a couple of things about passenger trains.

Different mentions in the text and photo captions of David Read's wonderful SP article may confuse people. As the employee timetable excerpt shows, Nos. 57 and 58 were indeed the *Owls*, which ran Oakland (Pier)—Los Angeles, and 59 and 60 were the *West Coasts*, which were Sacramento—L.A. trains. In earlier years, the *West Coasts* ran through between L.A. and Portland, as No. 16 and 15 geographically north of Sacramento.

In Dave Ingles' "Gem of the Prairie State" tribute to Illinois Central's *Green Diamond* [page 52], he comments about Chicago & Eastern Illinois' *Zipper* and *Silent Knight*. While they were indeed interesting train names, they were not actually C&EI's last trains on the Chicago—

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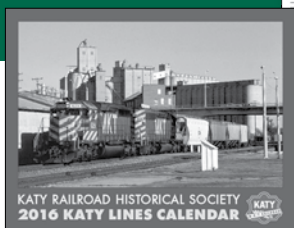


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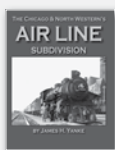
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St. Louis route. That was a name familiar today in a different context: the *Cardinal*.

Jim Corbett, St. Louis. Mo.

Malfunctioning Mallets?

I loved Louis A. Marre's comments about James Westbay's photo of Frisco 2-8-8-2 No. 2006 ["Malfunctioning Mallet," page 74]. The scene harks to Ozark shade-tree mechanics and their penchant to fashion solutions to mechanical problems minus the proper work space. It's a great vignette! The apparent pristine condition of the pilot makes me wonder if 2006 wasn't involved in a low-speed mishap. At the time, Monett had a 70-foot turntable, and longer locomotives were turned on the wye that connected with the Fort Smith, Ark., line. By May 1919, materials from Bethlehem Bridge allowed a 100-foot turntable to be built.

I have wondered about the repeated refrain that these locomotives were misfits. The notion that they were problem engines has not been supported with any evidence. The Frisco gave them a Cooper's rating of E-50, same as its 1040-class Pacifics and 1281-1345-series Consolidations, all in mainline use at the time. It was their relatively light axle loading that permitted the Mallets to work the Birmingham-area coal branches once they'd been bumped from Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma lines by more modern power during 1917-1923. The Mallets had handled oil tank trains in Oklahoma and coal trains in Kansas, later being sent to work between Amory, Miss., and Birmingham. The Frisco spent money on improvements to them (e.g., valves, stokers), and only the effects of the Depression and the arrival of more modern power doomed them to scrap, mostly in the late 1930s.

Karl E. Brand, Houston, Texas

Summer slips

• Page 14: The photo is from the Frank and Todd Novak collection.

• Page 86: The railroad initials in the last two sentences should be NS&T. ■

Got a comment?

If you have a comment or correction, write us at Fast Mail, CLASSIC TRAINS, P.O. Box 1612, Waukesha, WI 53187-1612; e-mail: fastmail@classictrainsmag.com. Be sure to include your hometown and state. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.



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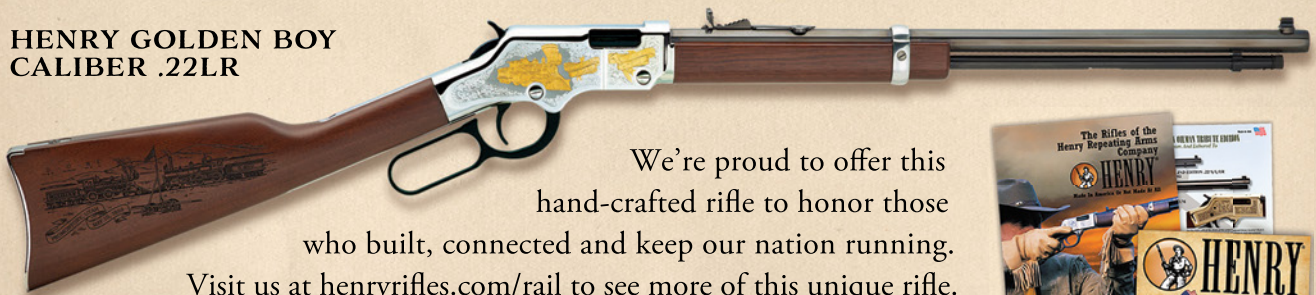


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Don't forget the fourth member

In the news item "Burlington Northern is Born" toward the front of our most recent Special Edition, TRAINS OF THE 1970s, was pictured a three-unit diesel consist at Garrison, Mont., in September 1970, six months after the merger. The locomotives in that photo still wore the colors of partners Northern Pacific, Burlington, and Great Northern. Nine months later, Keith Ardinger took this photo not far north of Keddie, Calif., on the "Inside Gateway" line (Western Pacific's portion here, but headed for ex-GN trackage), where we see another eclectic consist: ex-GN SD45 6431 and GP35 2545 (repainted from CB&Q 999), then an ex-CB&Q GP35 and, properly representing the fourth merger member, two ex-Spokane, Portland & Seattle C425s. Sorry about the omission, Northern Pacific fans.

Keith E. Ardinger; J. David Ingles collection





“The Work of the Age”

The Erie Railroad grew from New York — city and state — looking west • **By Robert E. Mohowski**



One of Erie's six FT quartets from 1944 heads west at Hancock, N.Y., May 12, 1956. Erie wound up with 81 EMD freight cabs and 60 from Alco.

Bob Krone

The title above is a quote, a proclamation by New York City's Common Council upon the opening of the 300-mile New York & Erie Railway in 1851, “Erie” referring to one of the Great Lakes. New York City had become the natural gateway to the west decades earlier. The city's excellent harbor, the Hudson River, and the Mohawk Valley provided a premier access route to the Great Lakes. Thus was the Erie Canal, completed in 1825, the first thoroughfare for the westward-seeking “Course of Empire” energy of the young United States. The canal's success reinforced, if not initiated, New York's proprietary adoption of the “Empire State” slogan.

To gain support for his “ditch,” New York Gov. DeWitt Clinton had promised

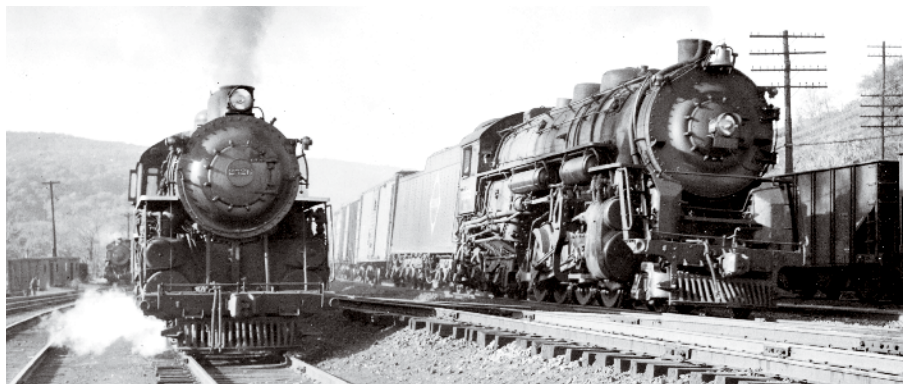
the downstate counties their own transportation corridor, and in 1829 visionary promoter William C. Redfield explored what became the route of the New York & Erie. He issued a pamphlet proposing this “Great Railway” between the Hudson and Mississippi rivers. This was also the year of the *Stourbridge Lion's* mechanical success at Honesdale, Pa., thus lending credibility to Redfield's project. Sharing his vision, and co-incorporator of the NY&E in 1832, was Eleazar Lord, of Piermont, N.Y., a promoter, land owner, business leader, and eventual three-time president of the railway.

Despite the canal lobby's efforts to stall the nascent railway, celebrated engineer Benjamin Wright was employed to find a route from Piermont, 24 miles

north of New York City, to Port Jervis, and then up the Delaware River and over mountains, through the state's Southern Tier and on to Lake Erie and the national interior. In an age when sections and states jealously protected their commercial and transportation interests, New York initially confined the route within its borders with a 6-foot gauge to prevent diversion of traffic and profits among neighbors (broad-gauge remnants would exist into the 1880s). Eventually it would establish better terminals than Piermont (on the Hudson) and Dunkirk (on Lake Erie), and seeing the logic of interchange, convert to standard gauge. Wright said \$4,726,260 would build the route, but almost six times that would be required. Ground was broken December 7, 1835, by James Gore King, NY&E's second president, at Deposit, N.Y.

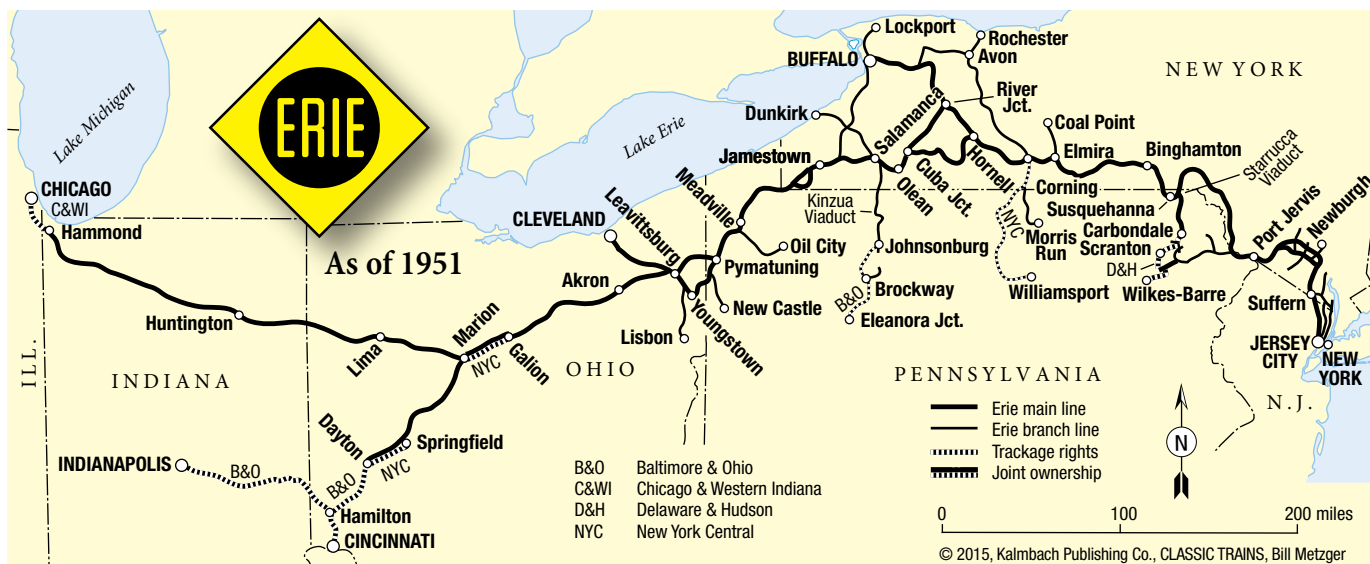
Moody's 1949 *Investor's Manual* reported the early Erie as being “. . . characterized by a succession of scandals, frauds, and mismanagements, in the face of which it maintained a surprising stability . . .” and further, “. . . it was not able to completely recover from the heavy financial burdens incurred earlier.”

Such was the character of Erie through the 19th century. Construction would be sporadic for years as funding was tough to acquire because of sectionalism, political roadblocks, internecine conflicts, and business depressions, but



Hotshot 98, behind 1928 S-3 Berkshire 3352, passes 1905 K-1 Pacific 2526 in 1946 at Suffern, N.Y., named for settler John, father of Edward, a pioneer bridge engineer (Starrucca Viaduct).

Frank Quin



Lord was able to get state legislative aid as the advantages of the route were increasingly recognized. His plan of state grants to match public subscription solved one financial crisis.

Early railroading was rife with trial-and-error in funding as well as construction technology. Lord's curious idea of putting the roadbed up on piles to meet topographical irregularities, wetlands, and winter snows was a prime example. Before this was deemed impractical, some 100 miles were up and much money had been spent. Stationary engines were considered to pull trains up steep grades.

The first train ran in June 1841 over the 18 miles between Piermont and Ramapo (present-day Suffern). That fall, service opened to Goshen, 28 miles farther west. However the company was broke again, and for the third time Lord assumed the presidency. He pressed for legislation to complete the route.

The NY&E reached Port Jervis at the end of 1847 and Binghamton in '48, the latter segment including the magnificent Starrucca Viaduct. Dunkirk was now but 250 miles away. With the completion of each mile, the builders were expanding the technologies: the limits imposed by grades, a need for strong yet flexible roadbed for ever-heavier locomotives, construction methodology and machinery, surveying skills, bridge- and viaduct-building, and iron-working.

All were met with increasing know-how and confidence. In fact, the first iron rails manufactured in America were used on the NY&E. The line reached Dunkirk in 1851, and for a time the NY&E was the longest railroad in the nation. On

board the first through train were U.S. President Millard Fillmore and Secretary of State Daniel Webster, who, for a better view, rode in a rocking chair on a flatcar.

The 1850s and 60s saw additions and line improvements, if not financial success. Leasing of the Paterson & Hudson River and the Paterson & Ramapo made for a more direct route from Ramapo to the Hudson River. Work began on a tunnel under Bergen Hill for even better access at Jersey City, where subsidiary Long Dock Co. built NY&E's own water-side facilities: Pavonia Avenue Terminal. Eventually yards would extend north into Weehawken and be served by one of the harbor's largest rail marine fleets. Ferry routes to lower Manhattan were added, and a network of branches began reaching into northern New Jersey and southeastern New York.

To the west, new lines reached north to Buffalo and Rochester. Through service to Chicago was established via western connections, and Superintendent Charles Minot added to Erie's impressive "list of firsts" with the creation of train-order operation, which became an industry standard. Raising capital, though, still was seldom easy, and in the 1850s, Daniel Drew, Jay Gould, Jim Fisk, and Cornelius Vanderbilt offered aid. This led, however, to their manipulation of Erie stock and the line's reputation as the "Scarlet Woman of Wall Street." In 1859 came receivership (the first of four) and reorganization as Erie Railway in 1861.

Beyond the Empire State

The developing Pennsylvania anthracite region offered large volumes of traf-

fic in response to the Civil War's industrial and military requirements, and the Erie reached south into the Lackawanna Valley with two routes that became the Jefferson and Wyoming divisions. These lines eventually connected with other roads for general freight interchange as well as coal. Farther west, the Tioga and Bradford divisions tapped bituminous coal beds. As locomotive fuel changed from wood to coal, Erie's coal-mining subsidiaries moved their product for all customers on home rails. By 1860, Buffalo was surpassing Dunkirk as a lake port and rail hub, and the Erie enjoyed a good Buffalo passenger business.

Jay Gould, as an Erie board member and president during 1867–1872, left a mixed legacy. Having transcontinental ambitions, he rebuilt the Erie after the Civil War and pushed it toward Chicago. The Atlantic & Great Western, organized by Ohio interests, was largely funded by British capital and after its reorganization as the New York, Pennsylvania &



GE A-B-B-A test-lab 750, ancestor to the 1959 U25B, rolls west at Burbank, Ohio, on August 9, 1957, during its 1955–59 stint on the Erie.

Frank and Todd Novak collection



Erie hauled New York commuters on five routes. From top: RS2 950 and Stillwell coaches are at Ridgewood, N.J., on November 17, 1955; riders detrain from two PA-led trains at Jersey City on March 22, 1957; and on the same morning, ferry *Jamestown* docks to reload for Manhattan.

Three photos, Bob Krone

Ohio, was leased to the Erie in 1883. Its earlier acrimonious relationship with the Erie included a battle to remove Jay Gould from the presidency. The A&GW served highly valuable coal and oil fields and extended the Erie main line west from Salamanca, N.Y., 300 miles to Marion, Ohio, with branches to the important cities of Cleveland and Dayton. Marion, on the main line, would become Erie's western hub. Acquiring A&GW brought a host of challenges to the Erie, partially contributing to its second bankruptcy, from which it emerged in 1878 as the New York, Lake Erie & Western. A key achievement was finishing the conversion of main lines to standard gauge

in 1880, but it would be five more years before branches and yards were changed.

Equally important was reaching Chicago if the line was to compete effectively with the Baltimore & Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York Central. This was accomplished in 1883 under President Hugh J. Jewett. In 1873, the Chicago & Atlantic Extension Railway was formed by the Erie, the old A&GW, and other interests. By completion in 1880 it had become the 270-mile Chicago & Erie, from Marion to Hammond, Ind. From there, the Chicago & Western Indiana, owned by several roads including the Erie, gave access to the new Dearborn Station and western freight connections.

At 1,000 miles, NYLE&W was not the shortest route between New York and Chicago, but it had a relatively low-grade profile compared with its competitors and would establish a good reputation for moving time-sensitive freight as well as, owing to its broad-gauge beginnings, oversize loads. It also boasted a fine salt-water terminal. Erie's passenger services offered quality if not the most modern accommodations to a loyal following, and the route's scenery was among the best in the East.

Crisis again loomed, however, with the 1893 financial panic. NYLE&W fell, as did many other roads. There was still the crushing burden of debt from the Drew and Fisk era, plus recent labor strikes, low freight rates, and ruinous competition. In 1895 the company was reorganized for the third time, now as Erie Railroad. It soon came under J. P. Morgan's anthracite roads "community of interest," and with the new century came an improved national economy. Erie's tonnage soared, and income followed. The capable Frederick D. Underwood arrived in 1901, at Morgan's request, to lead the Erie into an era of reconstruction and improvements. He also had the friendship and financial support of E. H. Harriman.

20th century improvements

Under J. M. Graham, engineering V.P., three major route improvements reduced grades and made for more competitive transit times. The Bergen Archways project, just west of the Jersey City terminal, put four tracks through the Palisade Ridge, reducing a bottleneck; the original double-track tunnel became freight-only. Underwood bought some of the largest steam locomotives of the era, including three 2-8-8-2 triplexes, naming some for notable engineers. Recognizing the loyalty and reliability of others, he created the "Order of the Red Spot." Upon his idea, the first railroad employees' magazine appeared in 1905.

One of the 1920s consolidation efforts to come out of the post-U.S. Railroad Administration period was that of the Van Sweringen brothers [Spring 2005 *CLASSIC TRAINS*], who began buying into the Erie in 1922 as they wished to add a direct line to New York to their Nickel Plate Road, Chesapeake & Ohio, and Pere Marquette. In 1927 they charged John J. Bernet, a proficient railroader, to administer the Erie, and he continued

the program of betterments begun by Underwood. The road became more efficient by scrapping hundreds of worn freight cars and more than 400 old locomotives, and by the addition of modern devices to cut fuel consumption by half.

Bernet brought in 2-8-4s (Erie eventually had 105), which assured a continued share of fast freight business. His 2½-year tenure, while certainly improving the Erie (it also paid the first preferred stock dividend since 1907), would not insulate it, however, from the economic storm of the 1930s. The Van Sweringens' parent holding company went bankrupt with the Crash, the component roads were sold, and the two brothers died in the mid-1930s. Charles E. Denny, a Bernet protege from the Nickel Plate and highly respected in his own right, led Erie through the Depression.

Gross revenue dropped from \$129.2 million in 1929 to \$72 million in 1936. C&O refused to guarantee a \$6 million government loan to pay taxes, vouchers, and bond interest. Denny and Cleveland lawyer John A. Hadden were appointed trustees overseeing a comparatively smooth fourth reorganization, completed in 1941. Simplification of Erie's affairs included a reduction in the number of affiliated or leased properties, and both debt and annual fixed charges were cut by half. Robert E. Woodruff became president in 1939, taking Erie through the war years. The road's efforts gained high praise, and its finances were in excellent order, allowing more modernization. Erie's first diesel switcher came in 1926, and FT road units in 1944. The FTs significantly improved performance, maintaining Erie's competitive position by eliminating the need to cut tonnage for Ohio grades and add helpers in New York. In January 1954, K-1 Pacific 2530 made Erie's last steam run.

In 1951 Erie celebrated its 100th anniversary with well-received events including a two-day re-enactment of the first train through between Piermont and Dunkirk. An actor played Daniel Webster riding on a flatcar. Erie, which claimed its entire main line had radio communication, prospered until the mid-'50s when Hurricane Diane, better highways, an economic slowdown, and regulatory hindrances conspired to reduce net income. Erie originated just half its freight, and its New Jersey commuter service incurred ever-larger losses.

In 1956, President Harry Von Willer

Erie Railroad fact file



(comparative figures are for 1929 and 1959)

Route-miles: 2,316; 2,215

Locomotives: 1,122; 484

Passenger cars: 1,368; 535

Freight cars: 44,916; 20,028

Headquarters city: New York, N.Y. (after 1931, Cleveland, Ohio)

Special interest group: Erie Lackawanna Historical Society, 290 W. Prospect St., Hudson, OH 44326; www.erielackhs.org

Notable passenger trains: *Erie Limited*, *Lake Cities*, *Midlander*

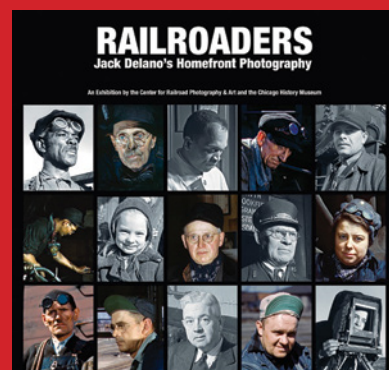
Recommended reading: *Erie Memories*, by Edward J. Crist (Quadrant Press, 1993); *Erie Lackawanna, Death of an American Railroad*, by Roger H. Grant (Stanford University Press, 1994); *Men of Erie*, by Edward Hungerford (Random House, 1946).

Sources: Above books plus *Historical Guide to North American Railroads*, by George H. Drury (Kalmbach, 2014); *Handbook of American Railroads*, by Robert G. Lewis (Simmons-Boardman, 1956); *Between the Ocean and the Lakes*, by John S. Collins (Collins, 1899).

saw sharing facilities and coordinating operations with neighboring Delaware, Lackawanna & Western as a way to reduce costs and ensure survival. This co-operation allowed abandonment of Erie's Jersey City passenger terminal in favor of the Lackawanna's at Hoboken, thus reducing exorbitant New Jersey taxes; permitted joint use of a single 75-mile route west of Binghamton; and saw elimination of other duplicate services. It was clear that more redundancy existed. That same year, the Delaware & Hudson announced it was interested in a three-way merger, but after further talks and study, it pulled out. The merger of the Erie and the DL&W occurred October 17, 1960.

Erie served its six-state region for 128 years with reliable transportation, commercial opportunities, jobs, tax support, and economic benefit and stability. Many portions of its system remain busy today, attesting to the visionary achievement of its founders and those who kept it going. Its emblem, a diamond enclosing a circle — which we have on good account represented the four points of the compass surrounding a globe — was a fitting vision of its service. ■

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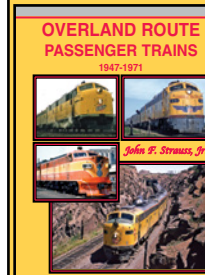
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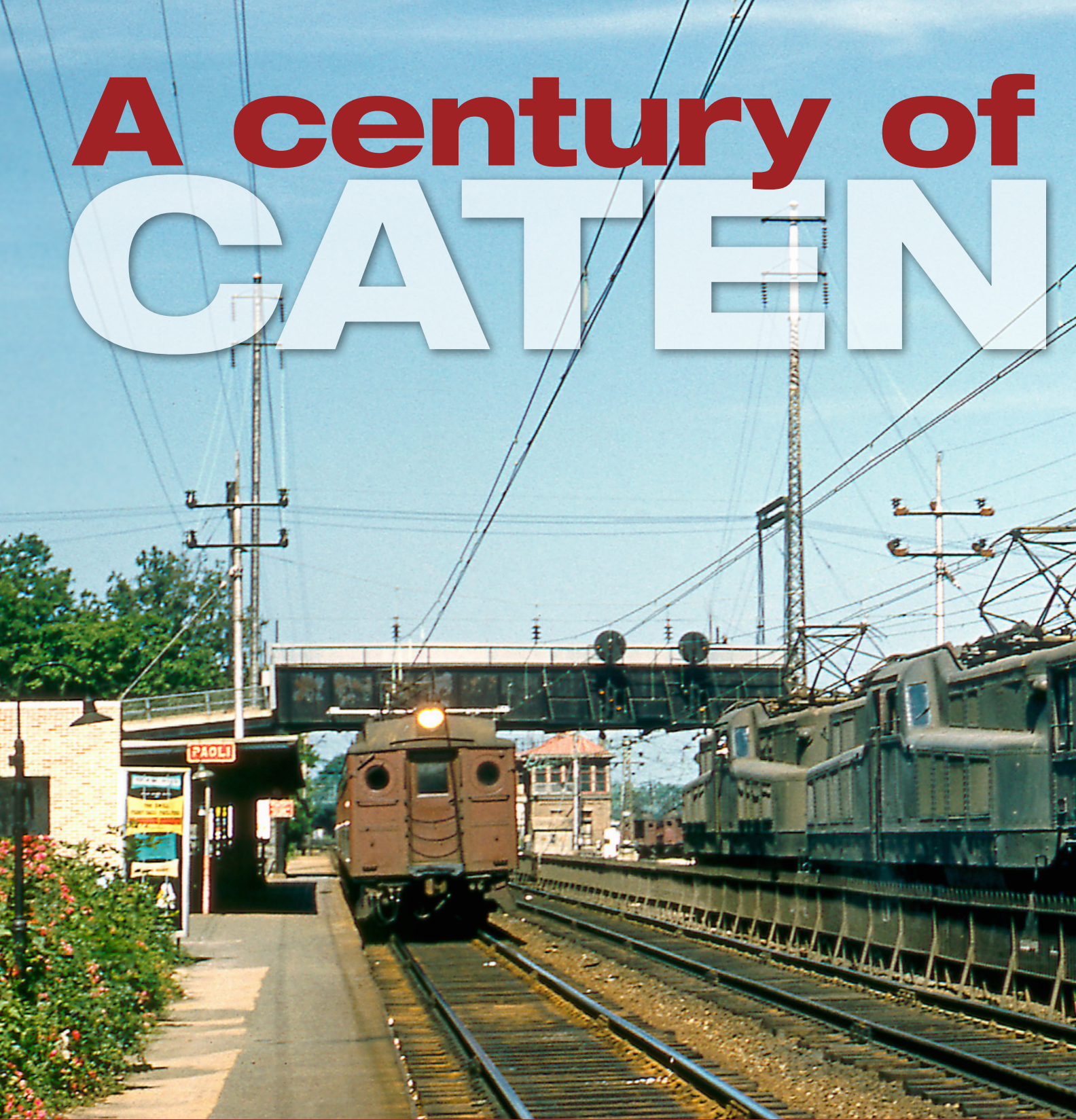


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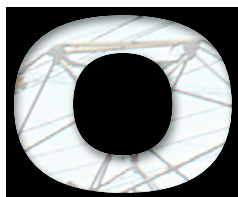
By Frank Tatnall • Photos by the author

ARRY



PRR's Main Line was a rich blend of electrically powered commuter, intercity passenger, and heavy freight traffic. At Paoli (main photo), an MP54 MU train waits to depart for Philadelphia as three P5a motors grind upgrade with an ore train in June 1960. Shiny new MP54s (above left) pose at Narberth in 1915; a century later in May 2015 (above right), SEPTA Silverliner V cars continue the catenary tradition at Berwyn.

Left, PRR; right, Robert S. McGonigal



ne hundred years ago, North America's greatest electrified railroad network was born. In 1915 the Pennsylvania

Railroad erected catenary over the 20 miles between Philadelphia and Paoli, Pa., to improve commuter operations. By 1938, that first installation had grown to encompass 656 miles of PRR lines, powering all classes of traffic.

The Pennsylvania was not the first U.S. road to electrify a significant length of main line (the New Haven was the pioneer, in 1907), and PRR's electric lines were not quite the most far-flung (Milwaukee Road, with 663 route-miles, held that title). But PRR's system was by far the most extensive, encompassing at its peak nearly 3,000 miles of track, worked by more than 280 passenger, freight, and switching locomotives and hundreds of multiple-unit commuter cars. Much of this electric empire has been dismantled, but those first 20 miles survive as a key

element in the most important group of rail passenger routes on the continent.

Paoli is a bustling town that anchors the west end of the upscale suburban area known to Philadelphians as the "Main Line." The town traces its history to an inn opened in 1769 as a way station on the original Lancaster Turnpike, and in turn the inn derived its name from an otherwise obscure 18th century Corsican patriot named Pasquale di Paoli.

American growth was westward, and when neighboring New York State completed the Erie Canal in 1825, Pennsylvania, to be competitive for traffic to and from "the West," decided to create its own cross-state transportation corridor. Officially known as the Main Line of Public Works, this 395-mile system from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh included two long sections of canal and, spanning the geographic obstacles between river valleys, two segments of railroad. At the east end, the 82-mile Philadelphia & Columbia Railroad was the surveyors' answer to the dilemma of crossing territory inhospitable to canals.

Paoli sits atop a long grade that until 1850 included the Belmont inclined plane, which hoisted railroad cars out of the Schuylkill River valley in Philadelphia. Through rail service on the P&C began April 1, 1834, hauled either by horses or locomotives, though some isolated operations had started in 1832. The P&C was a toll road open to all comers who had their own equipment, but in 1844 the authorities banned all horse-drawn traffic and, by default, steam became the sole motive power.

Before long, the P&C portion of the Main Line of Public Works had become the commercial spine of a rural area just west of Philadelphia. Merchants and villagers eventually adopted the name "Main Line" to identify and unify the series of small towns and settlements out to Paoli. Over the years, sections of farmland were developed into desirable residential properties for people working in Philadelphia — especially those with the means to commute. While some passenger accommodations had been provided almost since the railroad's incep-



An October 4, 1963, view toward center city Philadelphia from the suburban platforms of 30th Street Station captures three trains, all equipped with brand-new Budd Silverliners.

tion, this growing population began clamoring for efficient rail service to and from the big city.

Organized in 1846 to build west from Harrisburg, the state capital, the Pennsylvania Railroad purchased the entire Public Works transportation system in 1857, including the Philadelphia & Columbia. Passenger-carrying was just becoming a major factor for the expanding PRR system, but not so much in what today is termed short-haul services. Even after the Civil War, most rail travelers around Philadelphia still rode on longer-distance trains. In fact, the average customer rode for about 46 miles, so it took a while for the concept of “local” passenger operations to catch on.

Commuter rail service in the late 19th century virtually began on Philadelphia’s Main Line, but it’s unclear when the term “Paoli Local” came into common use. By the end of the century, PRR was running



At Overbrook, a porthole window at the rear of an inbound MP54 train on Track 1 frames Penn Central Silverliners on Track 2 in 1970. By crossing under the City Avenue bridge, the trains have just entered Philadelphia. The circa 1860 depot has long been the Main Line’s oldest.



With Overbrook tower presiding at the left, grimy PC E44s 4418 and 4412 drift through the station with an eastbound piggyback train on April 8, 1975. The 66-unit E44 fleet, built by GE during 1960–63, was the backbone of PRR, PC, and Conrail electric freight operations.

frequent Philadelphia–Paoli local service, with some trains operating all the way to Downingtown or West Chester. Not only did the trains carry a respectable volume of business people into the city and home again, but many city residents used the railroad in summer to escape the heat of that pre-air-conditioning era. The PRR even built a hotel in Bryn Mawr, 10 miles “up the hill” from Philadelphia, which catered to people looking for a nearby resort atmosphere. The railroad also was behind much of the Main Line’s residential development, and

many of its executives owned substantial estates along the line, such as A. J. Cassatt’s Cheswold in Haverford.

From third rail to catenary

Baltimore & Ohio became the first U.S. steam railroad to apply electric traction to its core operations in 1895, when steeple-cab motors began hauling steam locomotives and their trains through the new Howard Street Tunnel in Baltimore. A decade later, the Pennsylvania began installing low-voltage, direct-current third-rail systems on subsidiaries Long



An eastbound MP54 train departs Narberth in 1957. Note the 60-cent price of a round-trip to Philadelphia, the heavily superelevated curve, and the old station on the outbound side, since demolished.



Just west of Ardmore station, pinstriped GG1 4854 hurries a west-bound passenger train past the site of the Autocar truck plant, which was torn down not long before this September 1958 photo.

Island Rail Road, West Jersey & Seashore, and Hudson & Manhattan; all were worked with multiple-unit suburban or transit-style cars. PRR also used third-rail D.C. in 1910 for Pennsylvania Station in New York City and its associated yards, tunnels, and 5½ miles of main line to Manhattan Transfer, N.J., just east

of Newark, where electric locomotives turned over their trains to steam.

The next step for PRR was to electrify its commuter lines out of Philadelphia. After studies by the consulting firm Gibbs & Hill, with particular attention to the New Haven's pioneering 11,000-volt, alternating-current overhead cate-

nary system in New York and Connecticut, it was determined that A.C. would be more efficient than D.C. for high-density operations over longer distances. PRR management decided the line to Paoli was the leading electrification candidate, since it carried a heavy passenger-train volume and was one of the major



Motors 4843 and 4826, two of PRR's 139 versatile GG1s, head Transamerica piggyback trailers east at Merion in August 1961. Track 3, the westbound freight track, is white with sand dust from trains climbing the hill.

causes of the severe congestion at Broad Street Station, Pennsy's major Philadelphia terminal. The station's huge trainshed covered 16 tracks, but the terminal was stub-end, which made the switching of steam-powered trains time-consuming. On March 12, 1913, PRR's board authorized electrification from Broad Street to Paoli.

The 17 Main Line communities, from Overbrook to Paoli, sat astride a busy railroad, as commuter trains shared the four tracks with 50 daily long-haul passenger trains plus numerous local and through freights, all steam-powered, of course. Westbound movements had to contend with a nearly continuous grade from West Philadelphia to Paoli, making for a lot of smoke and noise for neighbors along the line. In the 14.4 miles from Overbrook to Paoli, trains climbed more than 300 feet in elevation, with a maximum grade of nearly 1 percent be-

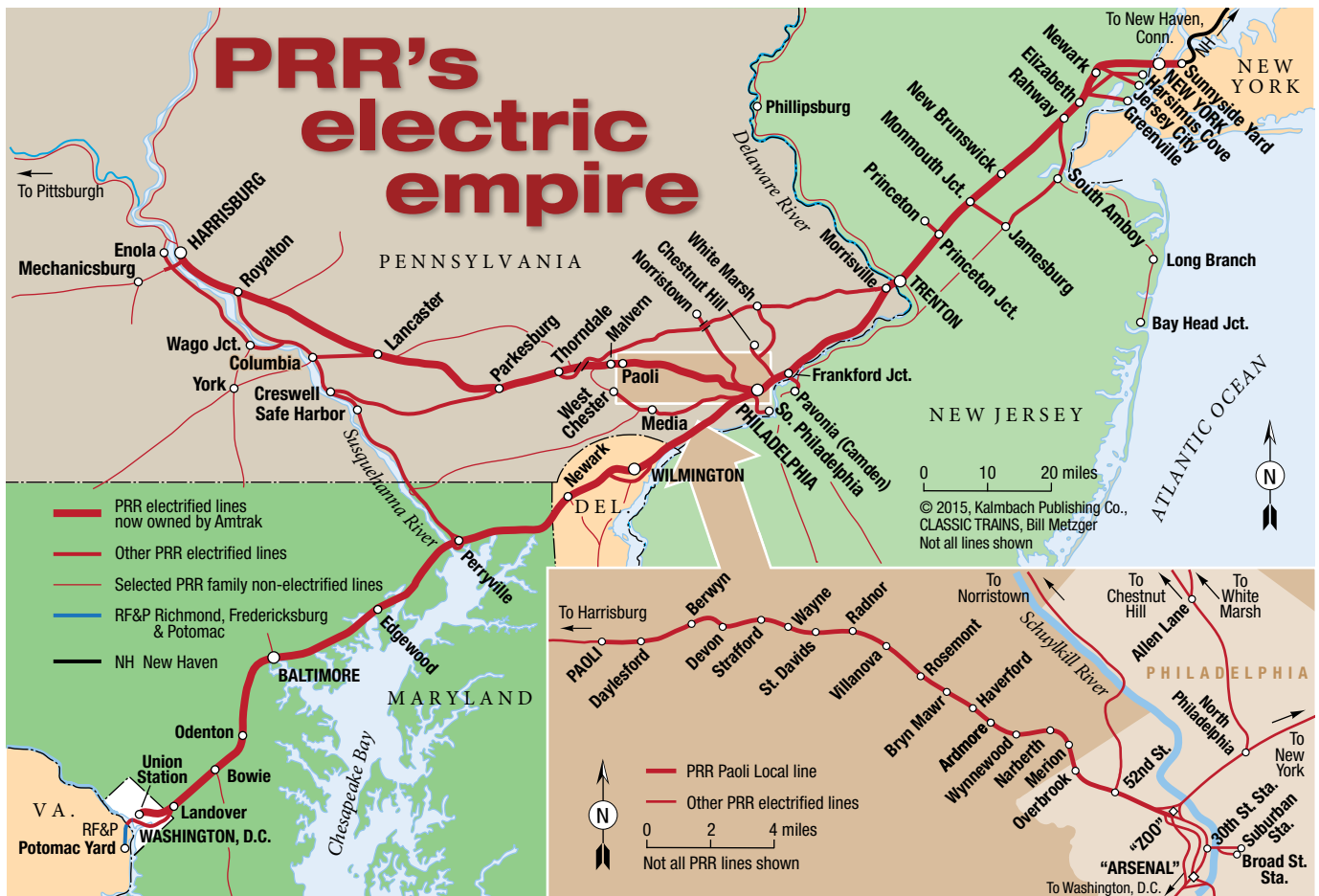


Observation car *Tower View* brings up the rear of PRR's eastbound *Broadway Limited* at Haverford on the morning of April 25, 1959. The stone building on the westbound side dates from just after an 1871 line relocation and once contained living quarters for the station agent.

tween Overbrook and Narberth.

Electrification promised improved — and cleaner — local service, plus a substantial reduction in operating costs. An added benefit was shorter running times, since electric trains could accelerate faster from stations than could steam locomotives. Ultimately, the congestion at

Broad Street was alleviated not only by the expanded electric operations but by the 1930 opening of the below-ground Suburban Station adjacent to the old terminal. Suburban Station, designed exclusively for electric commuter trains, was part of a PRR improvement program that also included the construction of



CATENARY CHRONOLOGY

- 1915** Philadelphia–Paoli, Pa.
- 1918** Philadelphia–Chestnut Hill, Pa.
- 1924** Allen Lane–White Marsh, Pa.
- 1928** Philadelphia–West Chester, Pa.
Philadelphia–Wilmington, Del.
- 1930** Philadelphia–Trenton, N.J.
Philadelphia–Norristown, Pa.
- 1931** New York–Manhattan Transfer, N.J.
- 1932** Jersey City–New Brunswick, N.J.
- 1933** New Brunswick–Trenton
- 1935** Wilmington–Washington, D.C., and Alexandria, Va.
Greenville, South Amboy, and Harsimus Cove branches
- 1938** Paoli–Harrisburg, Pa.
Morrisville–Enola, Pa.
Creswell, Pa.–Perryville, Md.
Lancaster–Columbia, Pa.
Shocks Mills–Royaltown, Pa.
South Amboy–Monmouth Jct., N.J.
Frankford Jct., Pa.–Pavonia, N.J.
Delaware Extension (Phila.)

30th Street Station in 1930–33, culminating in the closure of Broad Street in 1952.

The two-year, \$4 million Paoli electrification project, carried out mostly by PRR forces, covered the entire 20 miles of (mostly) four-track line west from Broad Street. Tubular steel poles erected 300 feet apart supported the catenary structure, which consisted of cross-mounted wires securing the messenger, auxiliary, and contact wires hung above each track. The road installed substations at West Philadelphia, Bryn Mawr, and Paoli, and built a large car-storage yard and maintenance shop at Paoli. All remaining grade crossings were closed. Position-light signals on steel bridges over the tracks replaced semaphores on lineside masts. (A modified position-light design became standard across the PRR.) The railroad contracted with Philadelphia Electric Co. to purchase 25-cycle, single-phase A.C. power, to be stepped down to 11,000 volts at the substations from the 44,000-volt transmission lines mounted on the same poles.

The next task was to provide rolling stock to carry the commuters, a decision having been made to employ self-pro-

pelled multiple-unit (MU) cars rather than locomotive-hauled trains. Bidirectional MUs would allow quick turn-arounds at terminal points, as opposed to locomotives that had to be turned and shifted from one end of the trains to the other. Since 1911, PRR's Altoona shops, as well as suppliers including Pressed Steel Car and American Car & Foundry, had been building a fleet of 54-foot (not including vestibules) steel coaches. These cars were designed to be converted to electric operation simply by adding a power truck with two traction motors, engineer's control stands, headlights and other accessories, and a pantograph to collect power from the overhead wires.

In preparation for the start of electrified service, Altoona in early 1915 began converting 82 coaches into class MP54, the new designation for an electrically operated coach. The catenary to Paoli was energized on September 4, 1915, and numerous test runs made over the next few days.

With hundreds of spectators watching, revenue service on the electrified Paoli Local began at 5:55 a.m. on Saturday, September 11, 1915, when a three-car



Inbound former Reading "Blue liners" (three in SEPTA colors) pass Bryn Mawr tower in August 1986. The 1931-vintage "Blues," which outlasted the PRR MP54s, will run through the center city tunnel, terminating at North Broad Street on the ex-Reading side of SEPTA's rail system.



In the PRR era, MUs worked the locals, and electrics led nearly all through passenger trains, but steam and, later, diesels handled some freights. Westbound Alco FAs pass MP54s at Rosemont in June 1960.



Two 2,400 h.p. Baldwin transfer units, PRR class BS24, lean against the cabin car of an import ore train out of South Philadelphia at Radnor in mid-1960. They'll push as far as Paoli, then run light east.

MP54 train departed Paoli. The electrics made just one round trip that day, but within a month all 66 weekday Paoli trains were being operated with MUs. The change was enthusiastically welcomed both by riders and lineside residents.

Expanding the empire

The Pennsylvania's management considered the Paoli project — and the soon-to-follow wiring of the shorter Chestnut Hill Branch commuter line — to be more than simply an effort to relieve the congestion at Broad Street. It also would serve as a test of A.C. technology in moving trains more efficiently under actual operating conditions. PRR at the time was considering electrifying

its main line over the Allegheny Mountains between Altoona and Johnstown, Pa. Although the Pennsy and its successors would flirt with the idea for decades, catenary never did go over the mountains, but the template the PRR established on the Main Line in 1915 produced spectacular results on its eastern lines.

Over the next 23 years, PRR extended 11,000-volt electrification to all its important routes east of Harrisburg. The initial extensions were for suburban traffic centered on Philadelphia and New York. Then in 1928, the company announced plans to electrify the main line between New York and Wilmington, Del., for all types of traffic. Soon this ambitious plan was extended to Washington, D.C., and

the big freight yard in Alexandria, Va., and ultimately to lines to Harrisburg and Enola, Pa. Much of this work was accomplished during the Great Depression, when the price of labor and materials was at rock bottom. But it still required great faith by the railroad's leaders, notably President W. W. Atterbury, to invest in major infrastructure improvements during a period of economic uncertainty and declining traffic. By 1945 the PRR's electrified trackage, including yards, totaled an astounding 2,789 miles.

Without electrification, PRR would have found it impossible to handle the passenger and freight traffic that flooded onto its lines during World War II. Certainly Amtrak's present Northeast Cor-



Afternoon sun highlights the gold leaf on the station sign at St. Davids as Paoli-bound MP54s pull in during the rush hour on August 31, 1961.



Conrail SD40-2s 6448/6437 and SD40 6241 have no use for the curving catenary west of Radnor as they climb west with MAIL-9 on November 15, 1979. Time is short for CR's electrics, and for freight on the Main Line.

ridor service could not exist without electrification.

Although the Pennsylvania wired hundreds of miles of main and branch lines along the New York–Washington axis during the 1920s and early '30s, Paoli remained the west end of catenary until 1938. For a few years beginning in 1933, electric locomotives hauled long-distance passenger trains to Paoli, where the motors were cut off and replaced by steam. This ended soon after January 15, 1938, when GG1 No. 4859 headed the first electrically powered passenger train through to Harrisburg.

Because of Paoli's location atop a ridge, both westbound and eastbound heavy freights often required pusher locomotives. The westbound helpers were based at the 46th Street engine terminal in Philadelphia, while eastbound trains got their helpers at Thorndale, 15 miles west of Paoli. This practice continued



F40PH diesels lead Amtrak 441, the Washington section of the *Broadway Limited*, at Strafford on April 20, 1980. For a time, 441 followed the New York section west to Harrisburg, where the trains were combined; beginning April 27 they were joined at 30th Street, Philadelphia. The ornate station was built in 1876 for use at Wayne, then moved west to Strafford in 1887.



On January 8, 1977, a Budd Silverliner II and a St. Louis Silverliner III skim through Devon on an Amtrak Harrisburg–Philadelphia schedule. Unlike today's Keystone Service, trains from the state capital in this era used leased commuter MUs and ran into Philly's Suburban Station.

after electrics began hauling freights.

Eventually PRR's fleet of "red cars," as the Tuscan-red MP54s came to be known, encompassed more than 475 units in coach, coach-baggage, baggage-mail, and full baggage configurations. PRR used the MP54s not only on its six Philadelphia commuter lines — all of which were electrified by 1930 — but on routes in the New York area (including PRR's Long Island Rail Road, which had its own, larger, fleet of third-rail MP54s), Washington–Baltimore, and on some longer-distance secondary trains including Philadelphia–New York and Philadelphia–Harrisburg. Oddly, only 80 of Pennsy's MP54s were built new as MUs, in 1926–27.

Silverliners and SEPTA

After carrying the stress loads of World War II, the Pennsylvania became concerned about the cost of maintaining its weary MP54 fleet. In 1950–51, Altoona

converted another batch of 50 coaches to electric MUs, in the 400 series. In contrast to earlier MP54s, the cars featured modernized interiors, recessed lighting, aluminum window sashes (but no air conditioning), roller bearings on all axles, and four traction motors.

A few years later, PRR officials contacted the Philadelphia-based Budd Company about supplying a new generation of MU cars. Budd had built a prototype stainless-steel lightweight coach for long-distance service, dubbed the "Pioneer III," but it had attracted no buyers. In June 1958 Budd delivered six state-of-the-art, air-conditioned cars based on the Pioneer III; PRR classified them MP85. The cash-strapped road did not repeat the order, but five of those six served until their retirement in 1990, well into the era of the current operator, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority, which in 1983 took over



from the 7-year-old Conrail direct operation of the former PRR and Reading Company commuter services. (Today SEPTA operates 13 electrified commuter rail routes out of Philadelphia: 6 former Pennsy, 6 former Reading, and a new line opened in 1985 to the airport.)

Five years after the Pioneers came, and with considerable financial and technical assistance from the publicly funded Passenger Service Improvement Corp., PRR took delivery from Budd of 38 new stainless-steel MUs. Similar to the Pioneers, the 1963 cars (plus 17 others acquired for use on the Reading) were dubbed "Silverliners." Then in 1967, PRR received 20 similar cars from St. Louis Car Co. The Budds later were officially designated as "Silverliner II" cars while the St. Louis cars became "Silverliner III." SEPTA retroactively labeled the five remaining Pioneers as "Silverliner I."

SEPTA later acquired two more editions of Silverliners. First came 232 GE Silverliner IVs, delivered in 1974–75 to PRR successor Penn Central and to the Reading. Starting in 2010, SEPTA began receiving 120 Silverliner V cars from Hyundai-Rotem's new plant in South Philadelphia. The last MP54s were retired in 1981, and the final runs of the Silverliner IIs and IIIs occurred in June

2012. In a tribute to their durability, some of the MP54s had seen nearly 70 years of service as steam and then electric coaches, and many of the Silverliner IIs put in almost 50 years on the road.

PRR/PC multiple-unit cars have dominated the Paoli Local, but a variety of other equipment has been used as well. This included a few GG1-hauled trains of non-powered coaches and, under SEPTA, several 1931-vintage ex-Reading "Blueliners" as well as, beginning in 1987, push-pull trains of Bombardier coaches powered by AEM7 electric locomotives. This cross-use of equipment was made much easier in 1984 when SEPTA opened a new tunnel in center city Philadelphia. The tunnel enabled trains to run from former Reading points to former PRR points and vice versa, and routes from one side were combined with those from the other to form through services. SEPTA combined the Paoli Local with the former Reading Lansdale/Doylestown line under the label "R5," though the agency has since dropped the R-series nomenclature.

Lasting electric legacy

Although the rolling stock has changed over the past century, local passenger service on the Main Line is much

the same in character as in 1915. Other changes have been more profound. The 1968 Penn Central merger saw PRR red give way to New York Central-inspired green on MP54s and station signs. PC's collapse led to Conrail in 1976, and some of the ex-PRR electric locomotives got blue paint. In the Conrail creation, Amtrak took title to the former PRR New York–Washington and Philadelphia–Harrisburg main lines. This resulted in Conrail's rerouting of freight traffic off the Main Line and onto a parallel ex-Reading routing and abandoning all electric freight operations in 1981. PRR's once-extensive fleet of medium- and long-haul passenger trains on the Main Line has dwindled to Amtrak's New York–Pittsburgh *Pennsylvanian* and several New York–Harrisburg trains. Even though the freights and limiteds are gone, Amtrak has retained all four tracks between Overbrook and Paoli.

September 2015 marks the 100th anniversary of the memorable day when a Paoli Local first ran under electric power. The Pennsylvania Railroad infrastructure is to a large extent still in place, though Amtrak plans to install new, taller catenary poles that also will carry high-voltage transmission lines from the Safe Harbor (Pa.) hydroelectric plant on



Veteran MP54s and a two-year-old Budd-built Pioneer III populate the yard outside the Paoli car shop in October 1960. PRR built or bought more than 475 of the “red cars.”

the Susquehanna River. The last two staffed towers, at Overbrook and Paoli, vestiges of the late 19th century, will be closed when remote control of the line is assumed by the Amtrak operations center in Wilmington, Del. But given its many notable features — the pioneering electrification, active interlocking towers, stone-arch bridges, 1930s-vintage signal system, and classic station buildings — the Main Line between Philadelphia and Paoli has been considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Today, most SEPTA commuter trains extend well beyond Paoli, to Malvern or Thorndale, in a service officially called the “Paoli/Thorndale Line.” The 1915-era yard and shops at Paoli were replaced in 1995 by new facilities east of Overbrook and at Frazer, 2½ miles west of Malvern. But, as one might expect in the history-conscious Philadelphia area, many folks along the Main Line still refer to their hometown train as the “Paoli Local,” even though they may not recognize it as the genesis of the Pennsylvania Railroad’s mighty electric empire. 🚂



Two Pioneer III cars move west from the Paoli yard on June 19, 1960. They’re heading for a switchback out of view to the left, then will use the track at lower right to duck under the main line and head east into the station, where they will start their trip into Philadelphia.



Amtrak GG1 4919 passes Paoli tower with train 40, the eastbound *Broadway Limited*, New York section, on April 20, 1980, a week before the end of GG1 usage west of Philadelphia. Note the tower’s new brickwork and windows, repairs made after a 1974 freight derailment.



Steam returned to the Main Line for probably the final time on May 18, 1986, when PRR 4-4-2 7002 and 4-4-0 1223 powered an excursion from Strasburg, Pa., to 30th Street and back. At Paoli, the special waits while Harrisburg-bound Metroliner cars make their station stop.

MONON MOM



Four facets of my railfan hobby coalesced on an October 1975 weekend in Louisville

By J. David Ingles • Photos by the author

The Louisville & Nashville gobbled up the Monon Railroad in 1971, but three years later the Hoosier Line still lived for a weekend, if only in our minds and in front of our cameras. Forty years ago, it was unusual for several facets of my railroad hobby to coincide on one weekend, but that's what happened on October 10–12, 1975. I'd been a diesel devotee since 1961. Steam excursions were frequent on several

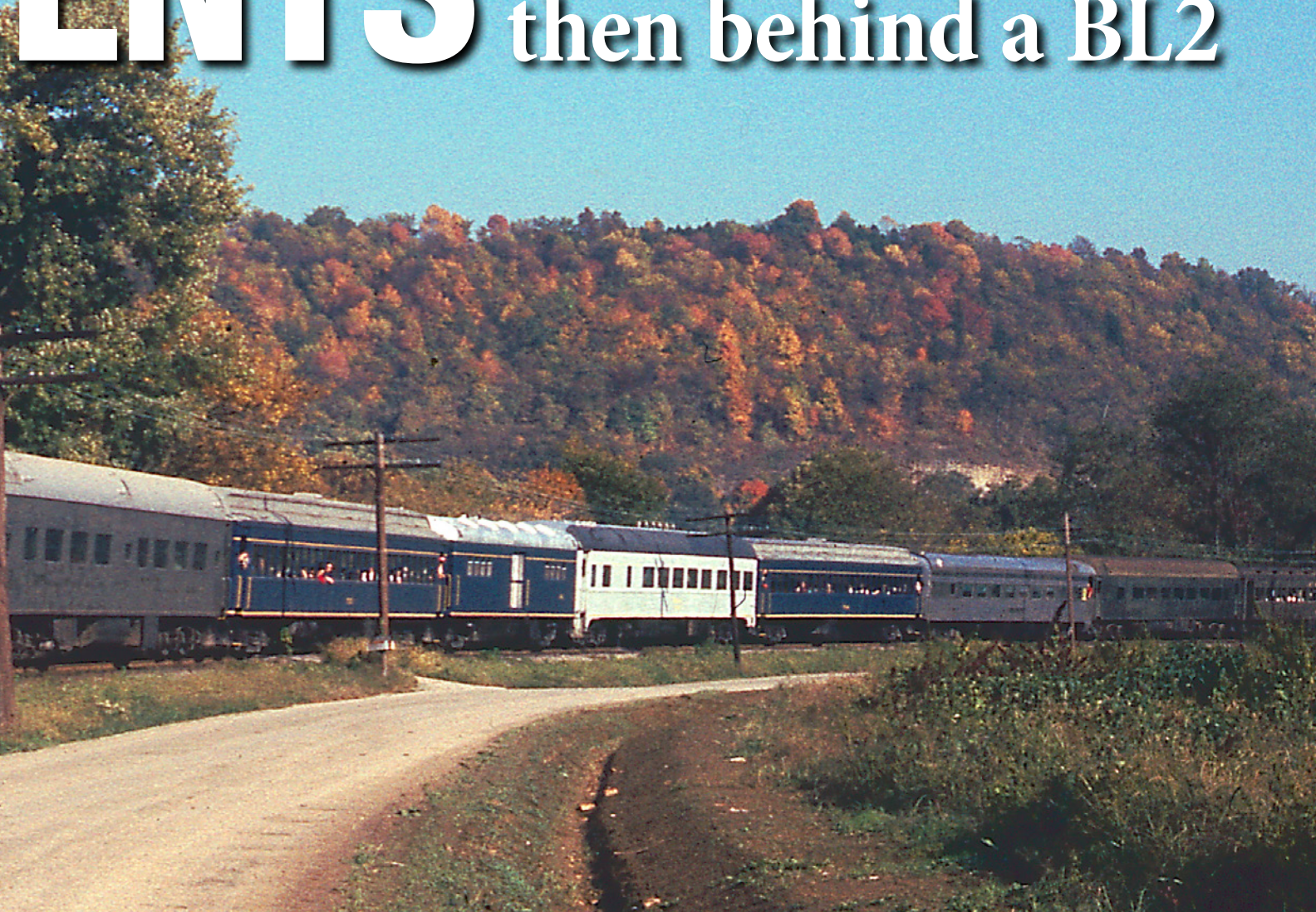
roads close by, but it seemed every time I'd ride or chase one for photos, the weather was dark and/or wet, no matter the month or locale. Thus did I, and several new friends, turn our interest to diesels and their development.

I'd been "collecting rare mileage" way before that term surfaced, since Dad and I had made several long-distance train trips in the late 1950s, and the new Amtrak had me trying to log all the system's routes, whether old or new for me.

My earliest rolls of 35mm color slides of railroad subjects dated from 1959, and I'd traded Kodachromes with friends across the land through the mail and at occasional gatherings during the 1960s. Our unofficial nationwide group in 1966 had coined the facetious monicker "world's greatest railfans," abbreviated WGRF. (Remarkably, WGRF slide-trading gatherings still are held today.)

All these hobby niches came together on that bright fall 1975 weekend in Lou-

ENTS Riding the route, then behind a BL2



Bob Anderson looks out a Dutch door (above) as our Amtrak No. 57 makes its Lafayette, Ind., stop at the Lahr Hotel on 5th Street. Illinois photographers Mike Schafer and Lloyd Rinehart, bound for the BL2 trip by car, stand by their tripods. We alighted in Louisville October 11 (above) to a gray sky to photograph our *Floridian*, but the day would turn clear and colorful, evidenced by the westbound photo (top) west of Frankfort.

Lower left photo, Robert P. Schmidt



Last used by the Louisville section of C&O's *George Washington*, the Frankfort station was the site of our first photo stop behind Monon 32.



Friend Bob Anderson chased the excursion eastward, making colorful photos like this, then he and I switched places in Lexington, he riding west and I chasing, getting it seven times.

Robert C. Anderson

isville, Ky.: taking Amtrak on a detour route, part of which I'd not ridden, to an excursion behind a rare BL2 diesel, with a slide-trading session afterward, and finally a day of diesel freight photography.

The Monon? I'd ridden its *Thoroughbred* twice between Chicago and the shop town of Lafayette, Ind., but not south of there, and I'd photographed a lot of its trains and diesels, including BL2s, but hadn't ridden behind one. Now I'd ride

the old Monon to an excursion behind a Monon BL2 on Monon's successor.

Beginning on August 1, 1974, bad Penn Central track through Indiana had put Amtrak's Chicago-Miami *Floridian* on other routes north of the Ohio River, first on the old Chicago & Eastern Illinois and Louisville & Nashville to Nashville, via Evansville, but missing Indianapolis and Louisville. On April 27, 1975, the train returned to the Hoosier

Weekend train consists

Amtrak 57, *Floridian*

3 SDP40Fs (550 in lead), 12 cars: Baggage 1194 (ex-NYC), 1159 and 1042 (ex-ATSF); coach 5608 (ex-SAL); lounge 3371 (ex-UP); sleepers 2692 and 2382 (ex-SP); sleeper 2793 *Nassau County* (ex-ACL); diner 8017 (ex-SAL); dome coach 9545 *Silver Vision* (ex-CB&Q); coach 5480 (ex-ACL); dorm 1406 (ex-U.S. Army)

KRM L&N excursion

Monon BL2 32, 10 cars: Baggage L&N 1488; coaches SOU 1209 and CB&Q 7158; baggage-commissary 9665 (ex-U.S. Army 89665); lounge *Traveler*; coaches CB&Q 7114, SOU 811 *Sweetwater*, SOU 1016, and Erie 2471 (Stillwell type); solarium lounge observation *Mt. Broderick*

State (but still skipping Indianapolis) on the former Monon, where it would remain until its discontinuance in 1979. And even though the *Floridian's* fall 1975 schedule down the old Monon was an overnight one, "the mileage still

About the BL2

Electro-Motive Division's BL2 has been called many things, good and bad. It seems whether you were a railroader or an enthusiast, you either disliked the BL2 or, well, you didn't mind it. I'm not sure a whole of folks "liked" it. Described by longtime *TRAINS* editor David P. Morgan, an unabashed EMD fan, as a "cross between an F unit and a Borden milk car," the BL2 was one of the rare missteps by the GM arm that for four decades would be the king of U.S. dieseldom.

For a "road-switcher," the BL2 — conceived to run alone, BL standing for Branch Line — had little visibility from the cab to the rear, despite its "cutaway" long hood, resembling the lines of a Pennsy GG1 electric. Although the BL had end platforms and steps, access from them to the cab was difficult. Moreover, some of the 59 BLs built in 1948-49 were outshopped without m.u. capability (soon rectified by most if not all buyers). Top competitor Alco in 1941 had launched what became the RS1 and in '46 had gone on to the larger 1,500 h.p. road-sized RS2. EMD in 1947 came up with the 1,500 h.p. BL, being not yet ready to release the internally similar GP7, the builder's first true road-switcher. Of course the "Geep" and its successors wasted little time in setting the U.S. railroading standard.

Nine roads bought the BL2: Bangor & Aroostook (8); Boston & Maine (4); Chesapeake & Ohio (14); Chicago & Eastern Illinois (2); Florida East Coast (6); Missouri Pacific (8); Monon (9); Rock Island (5); and Western Maryland (2). Note that only three buyers were truly "big-time" railroads of the era (C&O, MoPac, and the Rock). The first of the 59 Branch Line units, demonstrator 499, was designated BL1 until EMD, before selling it to C&EI as its third BL, in early 1948 changed the unit from an air-actuated throttle to a standard electrically actuated one and advanced the model number one digit.

Note the Midwestern locale of half the buyers, which makes it unsurprising that I saw in person BLs from two-thirds of the roads that bought them; I missed B&M's, FEC's, and MP's. And even though some of B&M's, C&O's, and Rock Island's were used in passenger service, including RI's on Chicago suburban trains, I had not ridden behind one.



Bangor & Aroostook BL2 57, returned to its original number, with an earlier paint scheme and given a name, is spun on the hand-operated turntable at Caribou, Maine, on a June 1980 excursion.

The largest BL2 fleet, C&O's 14, deserves a special nod. Predecessor Pere Marquette ordered the first 6, but before they were delivered, C&O absorbed the PM, so they were delivered in PM numbers (80–85) but lettered C&O with PM-style markings in a striped blue and gray paint scheme. The last 8 BLs came as C&O 1840–1847; 4 of the 14 had steam generators, but their only regular passenger duties known to me were Louisville–Ashland, Ky., and Muskegon–Holland, Mich.

Today, seven BL2s survive, thanks mainly to Bangor & Aroostook and Western Maryland still operating theirs as the diesel preservation era began. By 1972, most owners had traded in their BLs to EMD. In that year, though, occurred the first saving of a BL for posterity, as L&N donated its Monon 32, in operable condition, to the Kentucky Railway Museum, then at a riverside site in Louisville. (KRM in 1990 would move 48 miles south to New Haven, Ky., on L&N's "old line" to Lebanon, Ky. see page 76); WM 81 is at the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore and 82 on the tourist line out of Elkins, W.Va., while four BAR units exist: 52 and 56 on the tourist line at Saratoga Springs, N.Y.; 54 on the one at Honesdale, Pa.; and BAR 557 at the Cole Land Transportation Museum in Bangor, Maine. Not bad for an unwanted ugly duckling, eh? — *J.D.I.*

counts, buster," as the era's premier "mileage collector," E. M. Frimbo — alter ego of *New Yorker* writer Rogers E.M. Whittaker — allegedly uttered.

Which put me, and friends Bob and Marge Schmidt of suburban Chicago and Bob Anderson of Upper Michigan, in Amtrak 10&6 sleeper 2692 (formerly SP 9015) on the 12-car *Floridian* departing Chicago Union Station that Friday at 9 p.m. In Louisville the next morning, we disembarked at Union Station at 7:45 to make a cross-platform transfer to Kentucky Railway Museum's excursion, which would go east 87 miles to Lexington, Ky. Among my slide-trading friends who rode or chased the excursion were the Schmidts, Bob Anderson, and about a half dozen others.

Parting the bluegrass

After a cloudy start to the day at Louisville when we exchanged sleeper rooms



During the chase west, it was tougher than one might expect to juxtapose the train with typical "bluegrass country props" such as this gate at Yarnallton, Ky., 6 miles out of Lexington.



After visiting the former Illinois Central engine terminal in Louisville, our group of “WGRF” guys photographed a freight (above) leaving for Paducah. In my candid photo are, from left to right, Tom Smart, Paul Hunnell, Bob Wilt, Jim Herold, Bob Anderson, and Ron Plazzotta.



behind three SDP40Fs for coach seats behind the BL2, this October Saturday turned into as glorious a colorful fall day as one could ask for. KRM had 10 mix-and-match cars behind its BL2 [list, page 34], and we were off at 9:05 for Lexington, Kentucky’s second-largest city and the heart of its “Bluegrass Country.” I rode in ex-Southern coach 1209, second car behind the BL2.

As far as Anchorage, 15 miles to the east, our route was L&N’s double-track “Short Line” to Cincinnati, which had hosted the *Pan-American* before Amtrak. East of HK Tower at Anchorage, I would describe L&N’s Eastern Kentucky Division line to Lexington as a secondary main. It was better than a branch,

because it had been, by trackage rights, the route of Chesapeake & Ohio’s Ashland (Ky.)–Louisville section of the *George Washington*.

Out into the horse country we ambled past well-kept white (or brown) wooden fences, into what to me is a region containing some of America’s prettiest rural landscapes. At Frankfort, the state capital, we paused 10 minutes at the depot for a photo stop before proceeding east at 12:25, first through a short tunnel. We arrived in Lexington about 1:30 p.m. and disembarked for photos after the train was turned. Swapping places with Bob Anderson, I took his spot in someone’s car for the chase back, while he — although not a “mileage collector” *per se* — rode westward. My photo notebook lists seven encounters with the BL2 westbound before we reached Louisville’s outskirts, where the train outpaced us.

And . . . action!

That night, at least seven or eight of us gathered at Louisville friend Tom Smart’s parents’ home for a slide show and trading session. Sunday morning found our group in at least two autos for local photography, making the rounds of

engine terminals and chasing freights.

We, or at least the fans I was riding with, skipped L&N’s South Louisville Shops, but I’d shot units of the road’s varied roster there several times. After visiting Illinois Central Gulf’s engine terminal, we photographed an outbound freight (above). Next we went to Kentucky & Indiana Terminal’s Youngtown Yard, just south of the “K&I’s” Ohio River bridge to New Albany, Ind.

Southern, Baltimore & Ohio, L&N’s former Monon, and Milwaukee Road (by trackage rights gained in the L&N-Monon merger), all shared Youngtown and used the bridge. A Southern freight was about to depart west, so we crossed the bridge and waited for it. At the bridge’s Indiana end was an intersection with overhead road signs laden with highway numbers and directional arrows, plus another reading “Bridge to Louisville.” Here also, at the end of K&I trackage, the bridge tracks split into three routes, with the erstwhile Monon (and Milwaukee) going north, B&O curving northeast past its little depot, and Southern looping to the right around a cloverleaf and down to go under the bridge on its way west to St. Louis. (Today, not only



Our first freight at the New Albany end of K&IT's Ohio River bridge was this Southern run-through to Galesburg, Ill., with Burlington Northern SDs, which curved by the B&O depot (right) to loop down to river level. B&O's and L&N's tracks are in the street this side of the station.

Top left photo, Robert C. Anderson



Three Milwaukee Road "GP20s" — GP9s rebuilt at the road's Milwaukee, Wis., shops — lead a northbound freight off the "K&I" bridge and up the former Monon track in the middle of East 15th Street for six blocks. MILW gained rights from Bedford in the 1971 L&N–Monon merger.

are the K&I bridge's two highway lanes long gone, but only the old Monon and Southern tracks remain. With the auto lanes removed, today's Norfolk Southern line to St. Louis makes a direct left turn and descends to the old alignment. The former Monon goes as far as Bedford, Ind., but is inactive.)

Soon the Southern train approached, a run-through to Galesburg, Ill., with a Burlington Northern SD40-2 and two SD45s. Not long after it left, a Milwaukee Road northbound came through behind three "GP20s," as MILW called its GP9 rebuilds. As the Milwaukee train headed for Bedford and its own rails, we followed it up the former Monon to intercept the daily southbound L&N freight, scouting for good spots. Up front were four GEs (three U23Bs and a U25B), with a GP9 trailing. We framed it with Monon semaphores at a couple of spots, then drove ahead for a shot on the six blocks of street-running down East 15th Street, where we'd also shot the Milwaukee train. We crossed the K&I bridge ahead of the L&N man, then set up at the south end, by the K&IT wye just north of Youngtown, for our last photos.

With that, it was time to get to Louisville's Standiford Field airport, where at



Our first of several photos chasing this L&N freight south on the former Monon was at these semaphores north of New Albany. We got our last shots in Louisville coming off the bridge.

4:50 I boarded an Ozark DC9 for Milwaukee with a stop in Indianapolis. Gaining the hour back to Central Time, I was in Milwaukee at 5:40 and soon home from a rewarding and varied weekend. In subsequent years, I rode be-

hind BL2s on excursions on the Bangor & Aroostook itself plus the West Virginia Central and Stourbridge Line (Pennsylvania) tourist operations, but that 1975 bluegrass country outing still occupies a special spot in my memory. **L**



Traveling to see Grand Trunk Western and Illinois Central steam in February 1960, only weeks before diesels took over for good

By **Fred B. Furminger** • Photos by the author

Growing up in the 1940s and '50s was a wonderful time for a kid like me who loved trains and steam engines. I remember lying in bed at night listening to the whistles and rapid exhausts of New York Central Hudsons as they ran on the Niagara Branch a mile to the west of where I lived in Kenmore, N.Y., just north of Buffalo. By the time I was 12, I was building an HO-gauge layout in the basement of my house. In June 1954 I graduated from grade school and bought a Kodak "Baby Brownie" 127-size camera with my graduation money so I could take pictures of steam locomotives.

Just before the end



I wanted to get at least one good picture of a New York Central steam locomotive so I could have an enlargement made to use as a background for my model railroad. How naive I was to think a 127-size negative could be used to produce a wall-size photograph. I didn't do too badly, though — years later I had a 20x30-inch print made from one of those first negatives, with good results.

I took my first pictures of Michigan

Central, Canadian National, and Grand Trunk steam in the yards at Black Rock in Buffalo during the summer and fall of 1954 ["Boyhood Fascination with New York Central Steam," Winter 2008 *CLASSIC TRAINS*]. I soon realized I needed a better camera and purchased a new Kodak Vigilant 620-size folding camera. It wasn't long before my interest in model railroading was overtaken by my quest to photograph real steam engines.

Before dawn on February 16, 1960, at Pontiac, Mich., my pal Cliff and I caught Grand Trunk Western 4-8-4 No. 6319 awaiting its 7:10 a.m. departure time with train 72 for Detroit.

My desire to get one good picture of a New York Central steam locomotive to use on my model railroad turned into a passion for taking engine pictures that lasted until steam was done.

Steam photos were harder to come by as the decade progressed. By the time I



GTW 6323 hammers east at Pontiac with freight 512 on February 16. The 4-8-4 made GTW's final steam run 17 months later, and today is at the Illinois Railway Museum.

graduated from high school in June '58, only the Nickel Plate Road was using steam in Buffalo, and soon that ended too. However, live engines could still be found across the border in Ontario on both Canadian National and Canadian Pacific.

Even those CN and CP steam operations became out of reach when, on September 21, 1958, I began active duty with the Marine Corps. I'd previously signed up in a reserve program that obligated me to go on six months of active duty within 120 days of high school graduation, and then spend 7½ years in the active reserves.

My six-month hitch lasted until late March 1959. Within a week I was back on the job that I'd had at the *Buffalo Evening News* before going on active duty. When I finally found time to scout out the area's railroads, I discovered that steam was completely gone from Buffalo as well as from the nearby CN and CP

lines. I had missed my last chance to photograph steam in regular revenue service — or so I thought.

Steam to the west and south

One day in early February 1960, I learned that CN subsidiary Grand Trunk Western was still operating a handful of

I had missed my last
chance to photograph
steam in regular service
— or so I thought.

steam locomotives on passenger and freight trains in southeastern Michigan. In addition, Illinois Central, which had ended steam operations in May 1959, had fired up about 14 stored locomotives in late October 1959 because of a surge in business. The IC engines were way down in southwestern Kentucky. These GTW and IC operations were the genu-

ine article, but they were not expected to last much longer.

If I was going to get any pictures of these engines, I had to move fast. I called Cliff Redanz, a friend and fellow member of the National Railway Historical Society's Buffalo Chapter, to see if he was interested in making a trip to Michigan and Kentucky to photograph these operations. Cliff's answer was yes, and we both agreed that if we didn't go now, we would surely regret it later.

We were gambling with the weather by traveling in February, but we were young and didn't worry much about it at the time. Besides, we didn't have the luxury of waiting. We scheduled some time off with our respective employers and started out for Detroit on Monday evening, February 15, 1960, in Cliff's 1959 red Ford two-door hardtop. The temperature was below freezing, but there was little snow on the ground or in the forecast for the next few days, so the driving conditions were in our favor.

After driving almost halfway to Detroit, we found a place to pull off and get

some sleep. A few hours later we both woke up freezing and decided it was time to continue. We arrived at Grand Trunk Western's Milwaukee Junction roundhouse in Detroit a little after 6 a.m. on Tuesday, February 16. It was still dark, but no engines were under steam, so we decided to head for the GTW station in Pontiac, 22 miles to the north.

There we spotted GTW class U-3-b 4-8-4 No. 6319 simmering away in front of the station, coupled to a string of commuter coaches. She was scheduled to leave for Detroit's Brush Street Station at 7:10 a.m. with train 72, a nine-stop commuter run.

I had just enough time for a few time exposures before 6319's engineer whistled off and got the train under way. This Northern type would be the first of seven different GTW steam locomotives I would photograph that day. At 8:07, train 54, powered by sister U-3-b No. 6327, arrived at Pontiac from Durand, an important mainline junction 40 miles to the northwest. Although used by Detroit-bound workers, the daily-except-Sunday No. 54 was more than a commuter train, carrying head-end cars and coaches off mainline connections.

Next came freight 512 behind 6323, another U-3-b. This train originated in Durand and operated through to Toledo, Ohio, via the Detroit & Toledo Shore Line, half owned by GTW and the Nickel Plate. It and Toledo-Durand counterpart 513 usually met at the Shore Line's little Dearoad Yard in the downriver Detroit suburb of River Rouge, but after the Shore Line dieselized in 1953, if GTW steam was on 512, the exchange would be at Milwaukee Junction, as probably happened this day (the last regular GTW steam to Dearoad occurred in 1958). At the meet, the GTW and DTSL crews would swap trains but keep their locomotives and cabooses. On the GTW, both 512 and 513 would set out and pick up cars at the Pontiac yard.

From the Pontiac depot, we drove north to the far end of the yard, where at the roundhouse we found two class J-3-a Pacifics, Nos. 5038 and 5043, being serviced. A branch to the agricultural area of Michigan's "thumb" was the regular haunt for the last three of GTW's 1912 Baldwin 4-6-2s (5046 being the third). The servicing enabled me to get some nice shots of both engines. A bonus was provided when S-3-a Mikado No. 4070 was brought out of the roundhouse and spun on the turntable. By this time I'd figured out that everyone working for



At the Pontiac engine terminal we photographed a hostler filling the sand dome of Pacific 5038, which, with sister 5043, had just come in from plowing the branch to Caseville.



Also at Pontiac, GTW Mikado 4070 rides the turntable. Renumbered from 3734 in early 1959, the 2-8-2 went on to a 1960s-1980s excursion career and is now stored in Cleveland.



GTW Pacific 5629, another 1960s fantrip star (but scrapped in 1987), takes coal at Durand, Mich., 40 miles west of Pontiac, on February 16. From here we headed south to Kentucky.



After our overnight drive from Michigan, the Illinois Central rewarded us with 4-8-2 No. 2524 heading coal empties across Varmint Trace Road in Princeton, Ky., on February 17.

“the Trunk” in Pontiac was used to seeing people come onto the property to take pictures of steam engines, because the employees were friendly and didn’t seem to mind that we were there.

With more than 500 miles between us in Pontiac and the IC steam power in Kentucky, we figured it was time to get back on the road. Before heading south, though, we decided to first make a quick visit to Durand, where five GTW lines met. GTW’s Chicago–Port Huron main line through Durand had been all-diesel for several years, but the Detroit Division still had some steam.

We got there in just under an hour, and when we arrived at the yard, northwest of the big station and diamond crossing, the first thing we saw was a long line of dead steam engines. Then I spotted K-3-a Pacific No. 5629, in steam and moving toward the coal tower, apparently having just arrived with a train. We

took advantage of this opportunity to get some good pictures of the Pacific while the hostler serviced her. (She would survive in an excursion career under private ownership but ultimately would be scrapped owing to a legal tussle. GTW 4070 and 6323 do survive today, though.)

Exactly 41 days later, on Sunday,

We spent 2½ days driving between Princeton and Paducah, Ky., taking photos of IC steam locomotives.

March 27, 1960, Grand Trunk Western officially ended regular-service steam operations, although the 6323 saw occasional use until September 1961.

The long trip south

Immediately after we finished our photography in Durand, we set out for Kentucky. Cliff had purchased his car,

new, less than a year earlier, so he wasn’t in the habit of letting anyone else drive it. I can’t say that I blame him. Thus, he did all the driving; when Cliff got tired, he’d pull off the road and we’d get some sleep. This happened two or three times during the night, and we finally arrived in Princeton, Ky., during the afternoon of Wednesday, February 17. We spent the next 2½ days on IC’s line to Louisville, driving back and forth between Princeton and Paducah, about 45 miles west.

Illinois Central was a north-south railroad by timetable direction, even on the Paducah District of the Kentucky Division, which was on a predominantly east-west axis. Thus, trains from Paducah to the division point of Central City, though going more or less east by compass, were going northward by timetable direction.

When IC was forced to fire up some of its stored-serviceable locomotives in October 1959, there were plenty of engines at Paducah to choose from. The mechanical department folks picked out the ones in the best condition, with the



Mountain 2524 on empties (left) faces 2-10-2 No. 2739 with loads at the water plugs near the Princeton depot. Trains often stopped here while their crews ate at the nearby Choo-Choo Inn.

least amount of wear on their driving-wheel tires and the most time left on their flues. In fact, some of these engines had just undergone major overhauls at Paducah Shops before being put in storage.

During our time on the IC, I was able to photograph eight of the road's locomotives in steam: 4-8-2s 2524, 2551, and 2613; 2-10-2s 2739 and 2807; and 0-8-0s 3512, 3527, and 3548. All were clean and seemed to run well. Also, they all bore, to a greater or lesser extent, the hallmarks of IC's 1935-45 program in which some 434 locomotives were upgraded, rebuilt, or constructed from scratch at Paducah.

Our first catch was the 2524 at the Varmint Trace Road crossing on the west side of Princeton. This was the first of several encounters we would have with this 4-8-2, and, in talking with some engineers and firemen, I learned that they considered her one of the best engines that had been reactivated. They said she was a smooth-running locomotive, a good steamer, and that she pulled extremely well.

Not all the reactivated engines were



No. 2613, the only active 2600-class 4-8-2 at the time of our visit, restarts after pausing at the water plug. The Princeton Hotel stands beyond one of IC's 100th-anniversary stone markers.



In one of our several encounters with her, the 2524, powering Memphis-Louisville freight ML-2, takes water at Princeton's Varmint Trace Road on February 18. The far track leads to IC's line north to Evansville, Ind. Today, regional Paducah & Louisville operates these lines.



Here's Mountain 2524 again, standing at Paducah, Ky., on February 19. The night before, I enjoyed a 45-mile ride in from Princeton in her cab.



Eight-wheel switcher 3527 simmers in the sun at Paducah on February 19, our last full day in Kentucky. In the background, a 2500-series 4-8-2 stands in a long line of dead engines.



Another 0-8-0, the 3548 (Baldwin, 1927), works at Paducah against a backdrop of stored locomotives. Sisters 3555–3569 (Lima, 1929) were IC's last steamers from an outside builder.

trouble-free. On February 19 at Paducah we noticed 4-8-2 No. 2551 near the power house. A self-propelled rail crane with a clamshell bucket was in the midst of unloading the coal out of her tender. I was told that the stoker screw was jammed and that the men were determining what the problem was.

Princeton, about the halfway point on the 100-mile district between Paducah and Central City, was a logical place for train crews to stop for meals. When locomotives became more powerful and could handle longer trains, IC eliminated two of the city's grade crossings by building street underpasses, which left South Seminary Street as the only grade crossing in the downtown area. This enabled crews to park trains on either side without tying up traffic.

Nearly every railroad town had a favorite restaurant where engine and train crews went for meals. Princeton's was the Choo-Choo Inn, on Railroad Street about 100 yards west (by compass) of Seminary Street, easily reached by crews who had stopped their trains either side of the crossing.

Opposite the Choo-Choo Inn on the north side of the tracks, on Depot Street, was the IC passenger station, and across Depot Street from the station was the Princeton Hotel. Just west of the station was a water tank that fed two standpipes,

one for each main track and each a little more than an engine-length from the Seminary Street crossing.

It was common practice for crews to spot their engines by these standpipes while they were at the Choo-Choo Inn. Late on Wednesday afternoon we were fortunate to catch Extra 2524 North parked and facing Extra 2739 South while both crews were eating. This also gave me a chance to climb up in 2524's cab and visit with the fireman, who stayed on board to tend his engine.

Cab ride on the 2524

The next evening around 11 p.m., a southbound coal train stopped by the water plug. The power was none other than the 2524, with 65 loads totaling 5,794 tons. As before, the fireman stayed with the engine while the rest of the crew went to the Choo-Choo Inn. I again climbed up into the cab to talk with the fireman, who was the same man I'd chatted with the day before. He took a liking to me, and by the time the engineer got back from eating, the fireman had already asked me if I wanted to ride in the cab to Paducah, as long as it was OK with his engineer. The hogger was initially reluctant, but the fireman convinced him. Cliff, who wanted to make some lineside sound recordings as the train left Princeton and elsewhere, said he'd pick me up in Paducah.

It was just after 1 a.m. when the engineer finally whistled off and got the train under way. We ran at restricted speed for about 2 miles until we cleared the South Yard's yard-limit sign. Then we picked up speed until we were doing more than 40 mph. Cliff was able to catch us only once, at Eddyville, a dozen miles out of Princeton.

Like most IC engines, the 2524 had a beautiful, deep-toned steamboat whistle, and the engineer really knew how to use it. At the end of every grade-crossing signal he'd add a little extra *w0000-w00-w0000*. It was a distinctive signal done by a real whistle artist. In no time, it seemed, we covered the 45.5 miles into Paducah. When we came to a stop, I thanked both the engineer and fireman for taking me along and climbed down from the cab. After I was on the ground I realized why all the engineers and firemen had such a high regard for the 2524, as she indeed was an extraordinarily fine-running machine.

Friday, February 19, was our last full day in Kentucky. We spent most of it in the Paducah yard taking pictures of en-



A broken stoker has required the services of a crane to unload coal from IC 2551's tender. The 4-8-2 was one of more than 400 engines produced by Paducah Shops during 1935-45.



En route back to Buffalo on February 20, we stopped at Ilsley, Ky., to see Crabtree Coal 4-6-0 No. 102. Note the crude sandbox, added to aid reverse movements, behind the steam dome.

gines before going back to Princeton for the night.

A little less than two months later, in April 1960, all regular-service steam operations came to a close for good on the Illinois Central.

One final stop

We left Princeton for home on Saturday morning, February 20. During our time in the area, we'd learned about an old steam engine that was being used at a coal-mining operation in a little place called Ilsley, Ky., 18 miles northeast of Princeton. It was on the way home, so we decided to check it out.

The operation was the Crabtree Coal Co., and sure enough, when we got there, we found former Georgia Northern 4-6-0

No. 102 (Richmond, 1923) at work. As I watched and photographed the well-worn locomotive moving loads and empties back and forth in the yard, I couldn't help wondering what kept her from derailling. As with most such operations, the tracks in places were like two grooves in the dirt. After an hour of taking pictures and talking with the engineer, we resumed our trip home, arriving in Buffalo about 24 hours later, in plenty of time to get a good night's sleep before going back to work on Monday.

After traveling almost 2,000 miles in a week, was it worth making such a long trip to photograph just 16 active steam locomotives? It sure was, and it turned out to be the last time I would photograph steam in regular revenue service. ■

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW



South Platte River

Colfax Ave. viaduct

Passenger car shop

Steel car shop

Wheel shop

Power house

Dining-car commissary

Wood car shop

C&S/Santa Fe

Passenger car service and repair

Pattern storage

8th Avenue viaduct

To Pueblo, Colo.

Locomotive erecting shop

Machine shop

Site of Lake Archer

Stripping shed

Blacksmith shop,
heavy hammer house

29-stall main roundhouse

Test Dept.

7-stall roundhouse (passenger)

Storehouse and Mech. Dept. ofcs.

Roundhouse foreman's ofc.

Diesel service facilities

Steam service facilities

F-unit and car washer

Oil house

"Blue Town"

Locomotive storage

Empty passenger consist

To Pueblo, Colo.



Colorado & Southern roundhouse/shops

Steel foundry

To Denver Union Sta.

Buckhorn Exchange

Mariposa St.

Christopher Ahrens collection

Rio Grande's Burnham Shops in Denver

The infant 3-foot-gauge Denver & Rio Grande established its first roundhouse and shop facility in Denver during 1871 beside Lake Archer 2 miles south of downtown. During the ensuing 20 years the facilities were expanded and a third rail added to handle standard-gauge locomotives and cars that the railroad had begun acquiring in the 1880s. In 1881 the complex was renamed after George Burnham of the Burnham-Parry-Williams partnership, proprietors of the Baldwin Locomotive Works, of which the D&RG had become a regular customer.

By the early 20th century, the complex, in addition to a freight yard, included standard- and narrow-gauge roundhouses (11 and 30 stalls, respectively), locomotive machine and boiler shops, passenger- and freight-car shops, storehouses, and offices of the mechanical department. The closest Burnham came to building new locomotives was the 1928 conversion of 10 aging standard-gauge 2-8-0s into slim-gauge Mikados 490–499.

The narrow-gauge roundhouse was razed in the early 1900s after the 1890 standard-gauging of the entire main line made it redundant. The D&RG became the Denver & Rio Grande Western in 1921; the city erected the 8th Avenue viaduct over the shop complex in the 1920s; and in 1936 a modern testing laboratory was added, primarily to evaluate oil and lubricants. Ever longer turntables and lengthening of stalls enabled the roundhouse to keep pace with the growth of steam power, right up through 4-6-6-4s and 2-8-8-2s. During the 1940s, not long before this photo was made, the erecting/machine shop was outfitted to begin handling diesel repairs. After the last steam was retired in 1956, the need for a modern running-repair shop and servicing facility for diesels became increasingly obvious, and one was erected east of the erecting/machine shop in the early 1960s after demolition of the blacksmith shop, old storehouse, and mechanical department offices. The roundhouse also was removed but the turntable remains.

As the D&RGW was absorbed first into the Southern Pacific (1988) and then the Union Pacific (1996), Burnham took on a new role, becoming a system shop for General Electric units, even though the Rio Grande had owned only six GE diesels itself — diminutive center-cab 44-tonners of 1941–42, which were long gone from the roster by this time.

Some items of interest:

- The Buckhorn Exchange restaurant opened in 1893 and is still in business today; early Burnham employees would cash their paychecks there and maybe enjoy a beer and a free lunch.
- Chemical cleaning of steam locomotives before classified repairs took place in the stripping shed.
- In addition to its own locomotives, D&RGW serviced Rock Island power here during the steam era.
- “Blue Town” was where raw castings from contract foundries had the sand cores removed and were sand-blast cleaned prior to being machined for installation on locomotives.
- The passenger car shop repaired/refurbished standard-gauge cars and constructed new steel cars for the narrow-gauge Silverton train. — *Hol Wagner and Christopher Ahrens*

Donald J. Russell DYNAMIC LEADER OF THE GOLDEN EMPIRE



Southern Pacific's outspoken president hired out as a lowly "instrument man" in 1920 and went on to challenge the railroad industry in the postwar era

By John R. Signor

After World War II, United States railroads faced pressure from other (often subsidized) forms of transportation, inflation, burdensome work rules, and excessive government regulation. Sobering annual reports issued by one property after another detailed desperate efforts by managers to preserve what they could of their road's operations. Even the stronger western transcontinentals were struggling. However, in this era of little hope in the industry, a lone strong voice could be heard. This was Donald J. Russell, president, and later chairman, of Southern Pacific Co. He was often controversial, and his outspoken message of optimism challenged ways the business of railroading had been conducted for decades. He cast a long shadow over the industry.

Russell could afford to be bullish. Even as he assumed the office of president, SP was bursting with commerce. In his first three years at the throttle, annual revenues averaged \$673 million. Profits hit \$58 million in 1954 and continued to grow. The West in postwar America was growing at a fantastic rate. By 1955, SP was averaging 1.6 new on-line industries every calendar day. At first glance,

one could argue that SP was bound to prosper. But there was more to the story.

EARLY LIFE

Although he didn't set out to be a railroader, Donald Joseph McKay Russell played with toy trains as a child and was fascinated by railroading. He was born January 3, 1900, in Denver, Colo., to Donald McKay and Josephine Russell. His father died when Donald was less than a year old and the boy was taken to southern Oregon, where he was reared by his mother, a maiden aunt, and his grandparents. In 1912, the family moved to Oakland so Russell could attend California schools. Upon graduation from high school in 1917, he took a summer job as a chainman on an engineering crew for the Great Western Power Co.

Russell went on to Stanford University in September 1917, but left in April 1918 to join Canada's Royal Flying Corps in Toronto, Ont. Six months later, an airplane he was testing went into a tailspin, fell 3,500 feet, and crashed near Deseronto, Ont. The impact broke his nose, arm, and jaw. Discharged from the service in February 1919, he returned to Stanford that fall. Leaving Stanford the

following June, Russell applied at Southern Pacific for employment on September 11, 1920, and was awarded a job as instrument man, position No. 77 on the Sacramento Division. He was 21. He also worked as an extra gang laborer, assistant engineer, and timekeeper before his job was abolished on February 7, 1921.

On May 19, 1921, he was rehired, accepting a 45-cents-per-hour job as a student track foreman on Extra Gang 11 on the Tucson Division, a slag ballast job. Sacramento Division Engineer W. H. Kirkbride sent a note on ahead alerting local forces that Russell was "good timber," and that they should "place him to the best advantage."

By August 1921 Russell was back on the Sacramento Division, attached to a small extra gang engaged in cleaning ditches and forking ballast east of Summit on the Truckee District. "I noticed that the engineers didn't get very far unless they had track experience," he explained. Later he worked as relief foreman on the Placerville District.

Also in 1921, Russell married the woman who became his life-long partner, Mary Louise Herring, who grew up on a San Joaquin Valley ranch near Fresno.

SP President Russell looks uncomfortable posing with E9 6050 in August 1955. Train 76 was the San Francisco-L.A. *Lark*, the subject of bitter discontinuance hearings a decade later.

SP photo, Union Pacific Railroad Museum Coll.





An undated portrait shows Russell as a young man, after his nose was broken in a flying accident. In 1924–25, he was assistant engineer on the double-tracking of Donner Pass (right, view to west at Tunnel 41 in May 1924).

Two photos: SP, John R. Signor collection



Russell began to rise in the Engineering Department. From November 1923 to May 1925 he worked as assistant engineer on second-track construction on the Sacramento Division, which included two-mile Tunnel No. 41 at the top of Donner Pass. Between March 1926 and March 1927, Russell worked on the rehabilitation of the line between Grass Lake, Calif., and Kirk, Ore. This project included construction of new terminal facilities at Klamath Falls and Crescent Lake, Ore., as SP prepared to open its new Cascade Line. He was also involved in standard-gauging portions of the old Nevada-California-Oregon 3-foot-gauge line about the same time.

Russell was appointed roadmaster on the Oakridge (Ore.) District effective July 1, 1927. While at Oakridge he had a telephone headset near his bed and used to listen to the dispatchers until midnight. “I learned a lot about dispatching in that way,” he later said, “and I learned a lot of what was going on in the railroad.”

Russell’s interest and experience was noticed, and he was transferred to the Operating Department as assistant trainmaster at Eugene, Ore., on September 1, 1928; he was advanced to trainmaster on June 16, 1929. On August 27, 1934, he was appointed assistant superintendent at Portland, Ore. An appointment as assistant to the general manager in San Francisco followed on September 16, 1937. On July 1, 1939, he took over as superintendent of the Los Angeles Division, replacing C. F. Donnatin.

ON TO THE EXECUTIVE SUITE

On June 9, 1941, Russell returned to San Francisco as assistant to SP President Angus D. McDonald, who died shortly thereafter. A little over six months later, on December 18, 1941, he became vice president under President Armand T. Mercier. Russell was made a director in 1943.

During World War II, Russell frequently abandoned traditional railroad-ing methods and, sometimes over the objections of other officers, rammed through decisions that enabled SP to cope with the flood of traffic destined for the Pacific War. In January 1951, he was appointed executive vice president. Upon Mercier’s retirement on January 1, 1952, Russell assumed the presidency of Southern Pacific Co. At 51, he was the youngest president of the company since founder Leland Stanford.

Within days of his appointment, a Sierra blizzard marooned the *City of San Francisco* streamliner for three days in deep snow. As the nation watched, and the press alluded to the tragic Donner Party of a century before, Russell made

front-page news as he ordered his railroad into an all-out effort to cut through the record snowdrifts and reach the stranded passengers.

A few months later, on July 21, 1952, a violent earthquake virtually demolished much of SP’s main line through the Tehachapi Mountains of Southern California, twisting rails and collapsing tunnels. Russell personally directed operations at the scene to restore the line. Crews rebuilt 25 miles of mountain railroad in 25 days.

Russell, in his own way, was as much a builder as, and more of an innovator than, the “Big Four” founders of Southern Pacific in the 1860s, and he was often just as controversial. A hard-driving, no-nonsense executive with a penchant for re-examining all the traditional ways of doing business, he ruffled many feathers with his outspoken candor.

VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

In the immediate postwar era, Southern Pacific was in the midst of a program to add new streamliners to all its scenic routes. Russell supported that effort with lavish programs to advertise and promote SP’s passenger fleet. But the 1950s saw the establishment of the federally supported Interstate Highway System, and the advent of convenient, inexpensive, and rapid air travel. Travelers were deserting the trains for autos and airliners. Russell was quick to recognize the trend, and in 1955 he shocked the rail industry with candid predictions that the long-haul passenger train was fast becoming a

**THE HARD-DRIVING,
NO-NONSENSE RUSSELL RUFFLED MANY
FEATHERS WITH HIS
OUTSPOKEN CANDOR.**



After the July 1952 Tehachapi earthquake, Russell (left) discusses restoration work at Tunnel No. 5 above Bealville with Fred Gurley, president of the Santa Fe, which also used the SP line.

SP photo, John R. Signor collection

thing of the past, an opinion other railroad men might have held privately but had not dared mention in public.

"You can't make people do what they don't want to do, no matter what sales promotion techniques you use," declared Russell. "In 1955 Southern Pacific lost more than \$4 million on dining-car operations alone because we tried to give the best we could for what people can afford." The introduction of the hamburger grill car was a result. "So few people are taking overnight trips on American trains," he predicted, "that the Pullman car will be extinct in 20 years . . . and there will be very little, if any, long-distance rail travel." As *Time* magazine observed in 1961, "Russell's undisguised opinion of passenger trains is that of 19th century rail baron James J. Hill — 'A passenger train, sir, is like a male teat: neither useful nor ornamental.'"

"You can't get a train to run as fast as a plane." Russell went on to say, in an obvious dig at rival Santa Fe. "I think that

people who are trying to run [trains] too fast are doing a disservice." He drove home the point by freely admitting he traveled by jet airliner to attend regular meetings in the East. As his career was coming to close, and Amtrak had assumed operation of the nation's passenger trains, Russell and his successor at the SP helm, Benjamin Biaggini, made a policy that they wouldn't talk about Amtrak "because it's always sour grapes."

DIVERSIFICATION

Russell is perhaps best known in the business world for broadening Southern Pacific into the most diversified transportation company in the United States. At the time, the federal government, with enthusiastic assistance from state and local governments, was burdening the railroads with oppressive regulation as though they still possessed their 19th century monopolies. "We're in the business of supplying transportation to our customers, and if they leave us," Russell



Heavy losses on full-service dining cars (top) led Russell to introduce more economical cafeteria-style hamburger grill cars (above).

Two photos, Southern Pacific

argued, "we have an obligation to follow them." And by following them, he challenged archaic railroad and government policies, met competition from other forms of transportation, and pointed the way toward a combination of systems that helped revolutionize the transportation industry.

Russell believed that the inherent advantages of various forms of transportation could be combined to provide new services. Accordingly, he launched the SP into as many non-rail enterprises as the government would allow. He spearheaded the inauguration of piggyback in the West in 1953. Russell was the first railroad executive to start an oil pipeline subsidiary. "We were losing tank-car loads to trucks going down to Arizona and El Paso and so forth," he said. "So I told our people, if we are going to lose this business, let's lose it to ourselves, and let's consider going into the pipeline business, which we did in 1955 using railroad rights of way where we could. This was one of the most successful things of that kind that we have done."

By the early 1960s, Russell's SP and its subsidiaries offered piggyback and container services over a 14,000-mile rail network, operated trucks on 27,000 miles of highway routes, owned 2,400 miles of petroleum pipelines, and operated the world's longest coal-slurry pipeline. Later SP branched out into air and marine freight forwarding. "Basically I had a policy of trying to get into businesses that were related to transportation," he said, "something we knew something about."



SP retained steam for years after other roads because Russell thought it unwise to have costly new diesels sitting in storage during traffic downturns. In January 1957, a month after steam operations on SP's Texas & New Orleans ended, an NW2 switches cold engines at Houston.

Southern Pacific



Russell meets with VP-Operations J. W. Corbett in Russell's eighth floor "throne room" at SP headquarters in San Francisco in 1959.

SP photo, John R. Signor collection

Later diversification included rail equipment leasing, computer and communication services, and a land-management organization that developed industrial and commercial properties and administered 3.8 million acres of forest, agricultural, and mineral land.

QUEST FOR EFFICIENCY

"We don't take anything for granted," Russell told his people. "We have to go back over everything and ask why we did it in the first place. America's railroads

were built in an earlier day, before there was highway and air competition, and they had to become more efficient. We had to dispose of some of our plant, apply technology to the rest so we could do more with less," Russell explained.

The human element was not overlooked. In remarks to employees published in the *SP Bulletin* in 1960, President Russell observed, "Some outdated work rules date back to 1919. Many of these were fair and equitable in light of the conditions which existed when they were written. But there have been tremendous changes in the technology and competitive conditions of transportation in the last 40 years. It is vitally necessary to all of us that the problems created by wasteful requirements of our working agreements be solved promptly and with good sense and long-range perspective."

Between 1954 and 1964 Russell cut SP's workforce by nearly 30,000, down to about 45,000. "Featherbedding took some iron-willed determination, yes, but we paid heavily in dollars. We still have a tremendous amount of excess people," he said. "A decade ago we used to run elevators with an operator in each. Today we could run trains without people . . ." Despite this attitude, D. J. Russell, with

the possible exception of E. H. Harri-man, was one of the most popular and well-respected executives SP ever had.

In the matter of efficiency, nothing was overlooked. Passing an SP station that seemed too brightly illuminated, Russell once barked, "Who owns electric company stock in there?" In wide-open Reno, Nev., he introduced slot machines in the SP station. But for all his penuriousness, Russell did not hesitate to spend for new plant and equipment.

BORROWING AND BUILDING

Another way Russell went against conventional wisdom was in finance. While most of the nation's railroads were slashing maintenance budgets and concentrating on paying off debt, SP was borrowing heavily. "The most important phases of the railroad business are those that have to do with the making of money, or the spending of money," he said.

Large investments in long-term improvements included two landmark construction projects: a \$55 million solid earth-fill causeway across Utah's Great Salt Lake, completed in 1959 to replace a 12-mile wooden trestle, and the \$23 million, 78-mile Palmdale-Colton Cutoff line through Cajon Pass in Southern

MR. RUSSELL TAKES A TRIP ON NO. 10

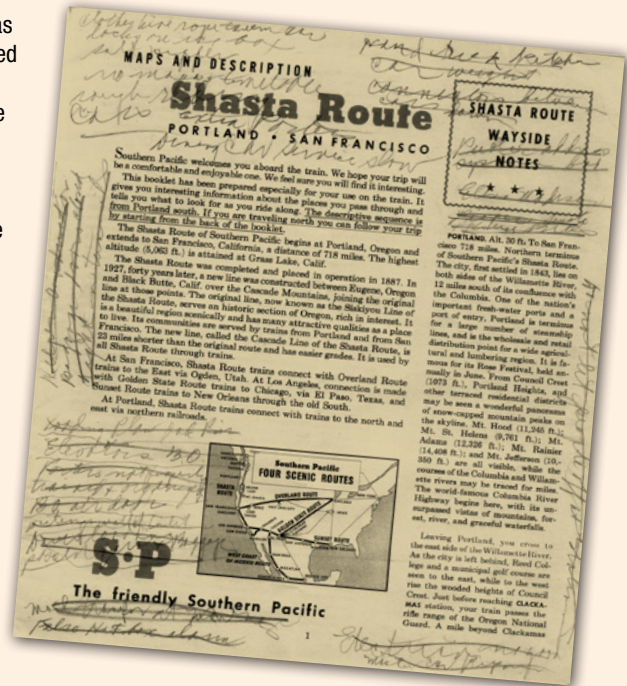
Sometime in the late 1950s, when the fate of the *Shasta Daylight* was being considered in the lofty offices at 65 Market Street, D. J. Russell decided to see for himself conditions aboard the streamliner. Departing Oakland Pier one morning on No. 10, Russell made handwritten notes on his Shasta Route guide describing what he saw. Evidently it was not generally publicized that he was making the trip because, as his notes reveal, the train and its crew were not putting their best foot forward.

For example, he wrote “dining car service slow.” Just to the left he wrote “rough riding cars.” In yet another note he wrote, “Porters not properly trained and organized.” On and on the list went, from “B.O. [bad-order] air doors,” to “hot drinking water,” from “clothes line rope in tavern car,” to “writing on toilet walls.” Russell’s keen operating mind saw room for improvement in the loading plan at Oakland Pier, the transfer of northbound passengers at Martinez, and the handling of through passengers detraining at intermediate stations. Many of Russell’s notes are struck through, indicating that the proper officers were informed of these failings.

Despite Russell’s attention — or perhaps partly because of it — SP discontinued the *Shasta Daylight* in September 1966. — J.R.S.

Russell’s hand-written notes cover a copy of the route guide given to passengers on the *Shasta Daylight*. The items that are struck through were apparently referred to subordinates for attention.

Richard Tower collection



California. Thousands of miles of new Centralized Traffic Control, and new classification yards built at Los Angeles and Roseville, Calif.; Houston, Texas; Pine Bluff, Ark.; and Eugene, Ore.; employed state-of-the-art electronics.

Time magazine reported in August 1961 that under Russell’s leadership, SP and its subsidiaries had invested more than \$3 billion in capital improvements since World War II — substantially more than \$1 billion in larger and more specialized freight cars and \$700 million in diesel locomotives.

Interestingly, in the matter of diesel expenditures, Russell was conservative. By 1955, many U.S. railroads were fully dieselized. Russell spread his purchases out over a longer period. During the 1954 recession, he said, “I’d rather have fully depreciated steam locomotives standing around than new diesels we’re paying interest on.” Not that interest payments were a problem. During 1954, a full 85 percent of SP’s \$20.8 million fixed charges were covered by non-operating profits like land leases and investments.

In the 1950s and ’60s, SP installed the

SP replaced its 1904 single-track trestle across the Great Salt Lake with a two-track fill, built between June 1955 and July 1959.

Southern Pacific





SP President Russell (right) and Santa Fe President E. S. Marsh square off during the Western Pacific merger hearings in 1961.

SP photo, John R. Signor collection



Dissatisfied with the relatively low-horsepower offerings of the domestic locomotive builders, SP acquired 21 4,000 h.p. diesel-hydraulic units built by Germany's Krauss-Maffei in 1961 and '63. K-M road-switcher 9111 leads cab unit 9104 at Bakersfield in October 1966.

Tom Gildersleeve

nation's longest private microwave communications network and its largest private intercity telephone dialing system, the latter becoming the Sprint network.

Sometimes, the weight of Russell's large investment budget influenced the industry as a whole. In the late 1950s, the domestic locomotive builders were willing to offer diesel units in the 1,500 to 1,800 h.p. range, but no bigger. "We needed big locomotives," Russell recalled, "and the Baldwin, General Electric, and General Motors people would not build them. So the Germans had this hydraulic locomotive and they were willing to build us a 4,000–4,500 h.p. engine for us, which they did. We had trouble with these locomotives, but that forced the hand of the domestic locomotive manufacturers. When they saw the way things were going, why, they got busy and built locomotives big enough for us." The result: the rest of the industry benefited with the so-called "second generation" of high-horsepower diesel locomotives.

RESEARCH AND REWARDS

When Russell became SP president, 96 percent of the road's officers had no college education. Under his stewardship, bright young executives were sent off to Harvard, MIT, Stanford, and other universities for company-paid study. "They can study anything they like. Chinese, so far as I care," he said, "it's broadening." A strong believer in research, Russell once told a reporter: "We even have people doing research on what we ought to be doing research on." Working

with Stanford University, SP people designed revolutionary new equipment including the hydraulic-cushion freight car underframe, which virtually eliminated freight damage. The device was adopted by the industry and earned SP substantial royalties. Another result of SP research, in partnership with IBM, was a \$23 million computer system tied into the microwave network to keep instantaneous tabs on all the trains and freight cars that might be on the railroad at any given time. Called "TOPS," the technology was eventually licensed to other domestic and European railroads.

In 1961 Russell managed to give SP the largest net income of any U.S. railroad, \$65.4 million. By 1967 net income had risen to \$90.3 million on revenues of more than \$1 billion and continued to rise. Wall Street was impressed. *Time*, in a 1961 cover story on Russell, said: "SP's present strength reflects the talents and character of big, bluff Donald Russell." It attributed to him "a relentless mental independence that forbids him to take as gospel anything that he had not thought through for himself." *Forbes* magazine, in another cover article in 1965, called

Russell "the man behind the dramatic changes that have swept SP in less than two decades," and it concluded, "If the SP fails to grow, it won't be because of stodginess or poor management."

As a reward for loyalty and perseverance, Russell started an officers' pension plan, but he disdained such conventional management perquisites as stock options. "When you have options," he argued, "management spends more time running up the price of the stock than running the railroad."

MERGER FRUSTRATIONS

While Russell was successful in many of his endeavors, two of his biggest disappointments involved mergers. The Rock Island case was one. "I got a call from the chairman of the Rock Island executive committee asking if SP would be interested in acquiring the Rock Island," Russell recalled. "I told him we might be interested in parts of it, but I thought Union Pacific might be interested and I would get in touch with [UP Executive Committee Chairman] Bob Lovett. So later our people got together and we worked out a deal where UP would acquire the Rock Island and sell the southern portion to the Southern Pacific." That was in 1964.

Virtually every railroad affected filed protests, which began the longest and most complicated merger case in Interstate Commerce Commission history. "At the time, the Rock Island was solvent, but the ICC took so long in the consideration of this thing that it finally

**IN 1961, RUSSELL
GAVE SOUTHERN
PACIFIC THE LARGEST
NET INCOME OF ANY
U.S. RAILROAD.**



One of the biggest projects during Russell's tenure as SP boss was construction of a 78-mile line between Colton and Palmdale, Calif., that enabled freights to avoid the congested L.A. terminal area. Ties and rails advance across the desert east of Palmdale on February 22, 1967.

Tom Gildersleeve

went bankrupt." By the time the merger was approved, UP viewed the conditions imposed, and the cost to restore the property to good condition, as prohibitive and withdrew its merger offer in 1974.

The Western Pacific case was another disappointment. "Wasteful duplication of facilities was one of the drawbacks of the time. We had problems with President [Frederic] Whitman and the Western Pacific, trying to get them to see that and eliminate duplicate facilities. So we tried to take over the Western Pacific in 1961 . . . to use the things they did better, but scrap the rest. But we were blocked by President [Ernest] Marsh of the Santa Fe." The ICC rejected Southern Pacific's bid for control of the WP in 1965.

Marsh and Russell also clashed over what became SP's Palmdale Cutoff. Russell recalled that he had a "gentlemen's agreement" with Marsh's predecessor, Fred Gurley, that would have permitted SP to use Santa Fe tracks. "But . . . Marsh reneged on this understanding and we built our own railroad."

OUT ON THE LINE

It was required under the Southern Pacific charter that the chief officer had to inspect the entire line once a year. Russell endorsed this policy and more. "Office cars allow you to meet with your



A leader on many fronts, SP under Russell developed the hydraulically cushioned freight-car underframe, a technology adopted throughout the rail industry. The first boxcar to wear SP's HYDRA-CUSHION paint scheme gleams on the downtown San Francisco team track in July 1957.

SP photo, John R. Signor collection

operating and maintenance-of-way people and talk to them as you travel over the property," he said. "Our plant has 22,000 miles of track. Unlike General Motors, you just can't walk through it."

When Russell was out on line, the whole railroad was on alert. A Coast Division engineer recalled, "I got called one evening for DJR's special to leave [San Francisco] around midnight. We got out a little late because he was late from the opera, but after we got moving, the next stop was San Luis Obispo. We had green

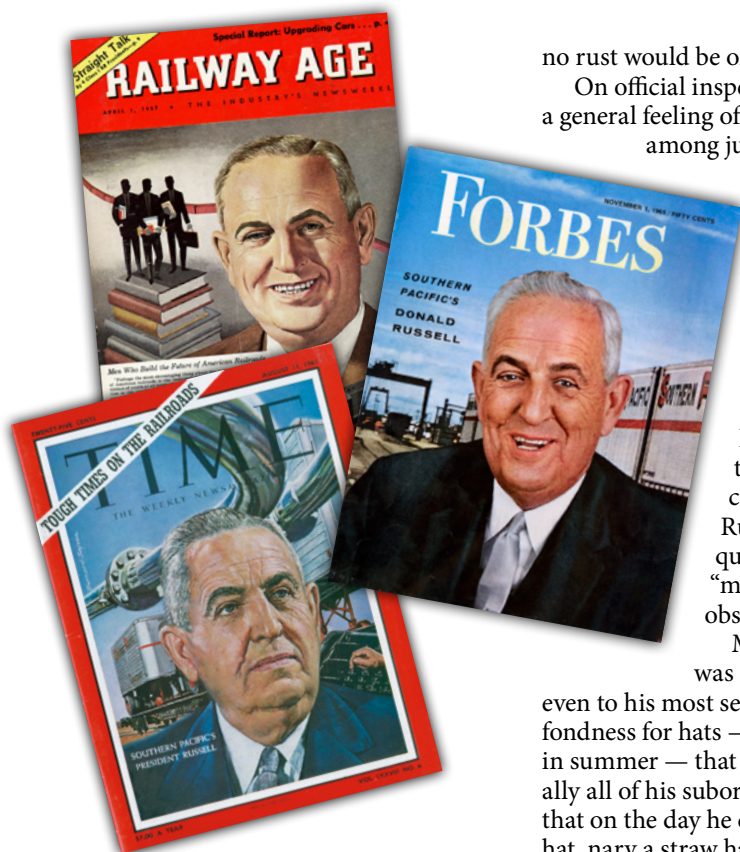
all the way, except for one yellow at Hillsdale, and that was caused by a night local that got in the clear at Belmont with all of its lights extinguished."

On SP's Texas & New Orleans subsidiary, Russell earned the sobriquet "Scrap Iron" for his tendency to scrap track or equipment if it was not being used. Sharp operating officers would have all standing equipment moved out of Russell's view as he passed through on his business car, and engines were run over lightly used passing tracks to ensure that



For years Russell traveled by rail to Truckee, Calif., for New Year's. Here the president's special is returning to San Francisco near Penryn in January 1962. Trailing Alco PA 6039, which wears the gray and scarlet scheme introduced in 1958, are business cars *Del Monte* and *Sunset*.

Ken Yeo, John R. Signor collection



Russell made the covers of *Railway Age* in April 1957, *Time* in August '61, and *Forbes* in November '65, among others. His position on passengers put him in the spotlight, and SP's stunning financial results kept him there.

John R. Signor collection

no rust would be on the rails.

On official inspection trips, there was a general feeling of nervous tension among junior officers at din-

ner. "You might eat 10 pounds of food, but lose 20 due to sweat," remarked one traffic executive. After dinner it was time for inspection at the rear of the car. Many stories have been told of those unfortunate officers having to answer Russell's rapid-fire questions on the "mourner's bench" in the observation salon.

Mr. Russell (and he was always "Mr. Russell" even to his most senior executives) had a fondness for hats — felt in winter, straw in summer — that was adopted by virtually all of his subordinates, so much so that on the day he changed to his winter hat, nary a straw hat could be seen in the General Office Building at 65 Market Street, San Francisco.

A story is told that in the mid-1960s, a crew was called for an officer's special from Los Angeles to Yuma and bused to

the depot at Glendale, where an immaculate E9 and a coach waited in the siding. Train 76, the *Lark*, arrived with Russell's business car, which was switched to the coach. While the switching was being done, Russell detrained and shook hands with the 40 or so officers who were lined up in perfect descending seniority/position order along the platform, beginning with the division superintendent. One of the men in the "receiving line" had not worn his hat, and as Russell passed along the line shaking hands and greeting each man by name, he passed over the unfortunate one whose head was not covered.

But this was no inspection trip. Russell and party, in this case a group of Chevron executives, were off to Arizona for their annual dove-hunting trip. The practice was to shoot off of flatcars spotted at a ranch near Chandler until one year they were kicked off the property by the state fish and game agency and the party wound up shooting doves at a feed lot. A devout Roman Catholic, Russell was often accompanied on these trips by a Father Black of the Archdiocese of San Francisco who, it was said, was "a bit of a rounder with a taste for gin." Although Russell testified to no use of intoxicating liquor on his original application for employment with the SP in 1921, his private car always had a fully stocked bar, in-

A VISIT TO THE LUCKY STRIKE

A retired division engineer recalled a memorable stop during one of Russell's inspection trips:

"I had been on the Sacramento Division about a month when the superintendent informed me that we would be accompanying Chairman Russell, Vice President of Operations W. D. Lamprecht, and Chief Engineer H. M. Williamson on a trip from Ogden to Sparks to inspect the railroad from the back of train 21. We were also to inspect the Mina and Fallon branches. It didn't look like it was going to be a fun week.

"The trip from Ogden to Sparks was uneventful with the usual unanswerable questions, and the next day we were well on our way south from Hazen by 8 a.m. to inspect the Mina Branch by hi-rail. At the end of the line, as we headed for the highway out of Mina, Russell asked if I knew where the 'Lucky Strike' was. There was a loud inhale from the three gentlemen in the back seat. Everyone on the division knew where it was. Lamprecht remarked, 'Mr. Russell, do you know what the Lucky Strike is?'

"The last time I heard, it was a house of prostitution,' Russell replied.

"The party proceeded to the establishment, which, as it happened, was on property owned by SP.

"When we were almost at the front door," the division engineer continued, "Russell said 'stop.' He wanted to go in. I rang the doorbell and a loud voice from inside said to come back at 5 o'clock, whereupon Russell said in a loud voice that he was her landlord and he wanted to talk to her. She opened the door and they chatted about how things were going. About this time two other females showed themselves and they were introduced as her girls. The chairman asked the madam if she would let him take her picture. She agreed and the vice president



SP business car 150, *Sunset*, is ready to go east at Sacramento on May 19, 1962. Pullman-Standard built the car for Russell in November 1955, and it was assigned to him for the rest of his SP career.

J. C. Strong, John R. Signor collection

of operations photographed Russell, the madam, and her girls on the porch so they could include the Lucky Strike sign in the picture. We all loaded up in the vehicle and departed Mina in complete silence.

"Finally Lamprecht could stand it no longer and asked, 'Mr. Russell, what was the significance of that stop in Mina?'

"To which he replied, 'Bill, I am going to have more fun with those photographs at the upcoming board of directors meeting at the Bohemian Grove showing those staid friends of mine how diverse the revenue stream on the SP really is.'

"This broke the tension and everyone started to laugh." — *J.R.S.*

cluding expensive German wines.

William "Willie" Green was the regular attendant assigned to Russell's car. Jansen Merrit was chef. After Green was paralyzed in an automobile accident, Russell saw to it that he had the best of care, and when he eventually died, Russell attended the memorial services in an all-black church and sat in the front row.

EPILOGUE

Donald J. Russell assumed the newly created office of Chairman, Southern Pacific Co., on December 1, 1964, being succeeded as president by Benjamin F. Biaggini, who had been his executive vice president. Russell retired on May 17, 1972, just weeks short of his 52nd anniversary with SP, at which time he was making a salary of \$155,817 a year. Upon Russell's departure, SP immediately acquired a corporate jet.

"I've given up meddling and veto," he confided to J. G. Shea, vice president for public relations at the time, "but I still meddle." D. J. Russell died on December 13, 1985, at St. Mary's Hospital in San Francisco.

It is sad to note that in the two de-

acades after Russell's retirement, SP slid gradually from the position of an acknowledged leader in the industry to a financially weak second-choice merger partner. What happened?

SP lacked a solid base of bulk traffic, such as coal or grain, relying upon commodities that fluctuated with business cycles, such as lumber, automobiles, canned goods, and perishables. SP traffic was especially vulnerable to the impact of the Interstate Highway System.

Yet many fixed costs remained. SP had major terminal operations that required large amounts of switch engines, fuel, crews, and supervision. Further, every major SP route in the West surmounted mountain passes with grades of 2.2 percent or worse.

After 1960, SP executives began to struggle with the effects of the system's declining revenue base. Yet management kept pressing for steady profit growth. With less money coming in, SP had insufficient funds to maintain the property adequately, much less invest in new equipment, technology, and plant.

Following the recession of 1982–83, management became preoccupied with

the possibility of a merger with the Santa Fe, which came to naught. SP was placed under the trusteeship of banks, which held any attempt at aggressive management in check. Meanwhile, the UP-MoPac-WP merger further reduced SP's market share.

In the face of all these challenges, it is difficult to see how even D. J. Russell could have successfully steered SP through these stormy waters, which ultimately led to acquisition by Philip Anschutz's Denver & Rio Grande Western in 1988 (though the Southern Pacific name was kept), and finally assimilation into the vast Union Pacific system in 1996.

Nevertheless, during Russell's tenure at the top, SP looked unbeatable, prompting TRAINS magazine Editor David P. Morgan to call it "the new standard railroad of the world." And *Business Week* editorialized in 1968: "To its natural advantages of a productive and growing territory, SP has added innovation and imagination, plus a determination to chase the traffic spirited away by trucks and planes. The imagination and determination sprang first from Chairman Donald J. Russell." ■

Virginian Railway train 4 at Roanoke

A Pacific departs with the coal road's daily passenger local to Norfolk in 1955

Text by **Jerry A. Pinkepank** • Photo from Krambles-Peterson Archive



The Virginian Railway was a 662-mile common carrier founded by industrialist Henry Huttleston Rogers to haul coal from Appalachian mines to an Atlantic port. VGN opened its full length in 1909, over the opposition of competing Pocahontas-region coal roads Chesapeake & Ohio and Norfolk & Western. Eastern Gas & Fuel Associates acquired control in 1937. Eastern's main business was to move high-Btu coal, used to make coal gas for the Boston area, from VGN's Sewells Point (Norfolk, Va.) piers up the coast by steamship. Many of the mines where this coal originated belonged to Eastern's affiliate Koppers Coal. After coveting the Virginian for decades, N&W acquired it on December 1, 1959. By then, natural gas had replaced coal gas and the high-quality coal was used for other purposes, such as steelmaking and electricity generation.

From VGN's inception to January 29, 1956, there was just one passenger train each way per day across the road's 435-mile, mostly single-track main line from Norfolk to the New York Central and C&O connections near Deepwater Bridge, W.Va. By the time of this 1955 photo of eastbound No. 4 in its last months, the trains ran in two segments. In West Virginia, they ran 101 miles between Page and the Virginia state line at Hale's Gap, and 243 miles between Roanoke and Norfolk. Train 4 was scheduled to depart Roanoke at 8 a.m. and to arrive Norfolk at 3:30 p.m. No. 3's times were the same: out of Norfolk 8 a.m., into Roanoke 3:30 p.m.

1 Walnut Avenue tower. Also called JK Tower, it governed the VGN-N&W crossing in the foreground as well as the entry to VGN's Roanoke Yard in the distance. Cabin-style structure and electric interlocking plant replaced a two-story tower and mechanical plant in 1946.

2 Walnut Avenue overpass. Blackened by steam-locomotive exhaust, the bridge is the east end of VGN's 11,000-volt A.C. electrification from Mullens, W.Va., 134.5 miles, completed 1926. Side-rod box-cabs were the initial motive power, joined in 1948 by four streamlined two-unit motor-generator locomotives; 12 road-switcher electrics arrived in 1956. N&W idled the VGN electrics June 30, 1962, because

it had adopted directional running on the parallel ex-VGN and original N&W main lines, an arrangement that required the electrics to deadhead back to Mullens from Roanoke. VGN's passenger trains were steam-powered, even under wire.



Virginian electrics: EL-3A (top, 1926); EL-2B (1948); and EL-C (1956). Richard J. Cook; GE; GE

3 Jefferson Street overpass. The Virginian passenger station was between Jefferson and Walnut, 1 1/4 miles south of N&W's Roanoke station. It still exists and is owned by the Roanoke Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, which is rehabilitating it.



July 2015 view of the Virginian station, hidden by train in main photo. Robert S. McGonigal

4 Fairbanks-Morse H16-44 No. 22. Delivered in January 1955. A puff of white smoke indicates the throttle has just been opened and there is water in the exhaust stream, which was often the case with FM diesels, usually with some blue tint indicating oil as well, as is the case here. Except for one General Electric 44-tonner, VGN was all-FM, with 40 H16-44s and 19 H24-66 Train Masters; the road-switchers were set up with the long hood as front.

5 Two-headed searchlight signal. Seen from behind, controlled by Walnut Avenue tower, it is the home signal protecting the main track's crossing of the N&W line (item 11).

6 Dwarf signal. Counterpart to the main track's "high" signal, it governs a side track used by trains stopping at the depot. Trains waited behind this signal while at the station to avoid giving red signals to the N&W line, then received the go-ahead green from Walnut Avenue tower.

7 Leased N&W coach. Virginian had 10 steel coaches of its own, but they were not air-conditioned. VGN leased modernized N&W coaches for use on Nos. 3 and 4 during the trains' last months of service.

8 Mail-baggage-express car. VGN had four such cars, built in 1921. Trains 3 and 4 stopped at every little hamlet between Roanoke and Norfolk, 43 potential stops, mostly conditional ("flag") stops. The provision of U.S. Mail and Railway Express service to those communities was an important function for the trains.

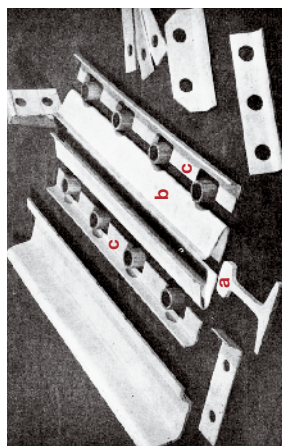
9 Class PA 4-6-2 No. 215. VGN received six class PAs, Nos. 210-215, from American Locomotive Co.'s Richmond (Va.) works in 1920 to haul all-steel cars over the road's tough grades. They replaced 4-6-0s built to handle steel-underframe/wood-body cars. The PAs had 26x28-inch cylinders, 69-inch drivers, and 200 lbs. boiler pressure (190 originally), resulting in a tractive effort rating of 46,634 lbs. When built, they worked trains 13 and 14, which were night runs with Pullman sleepers between Norfolk and Roanoke. West of Roanoke they were day trains

with club cars that ran through to Ashland, Ky., via C&O and, later to Charleston, W.Va., via NYC.

10 Section-gang toolhouse. Wide door facing the track for a motor car, and wooden runners for it out to the nearest track, where it would be swung onto the rails by hand.

11 N&W Winston-Salem line. Double-track secondary line to Winston-Salem, N.C. (to left), where the jointly owned Winston-Salem Southbound Railroad provided N&W with its connection to the Atlantic Coast Line system.

12 Insulated rail joints. Both the VGN and N&W lines were signaled using 6-volt track circuits, and it was necessary to keep the circuits out of the diamonds. Insulated joints had material made of Vulcanized cotton fiber to keep the current from jumping across the gap between rails. The narrow strip of fiber behind the bolt heads and nuts identifies the insulated joints. Fiber parts used to insulate a four-hole joint bar are seen below. Some of the pieces shown are for specialized applications, but the rail-shaped joint-gap piece (a), the wrapper for the rail base (b), and the strips and bushings for the bolt area (c) are essentials.



Shapes made of Vulcanized cotton fiber for use in insulated rail joints. Taylor Fibre Co.

13 Bonded rail joint. A woven wire passes above the bolt heads and nuts outside the joint bar. The wire connects pins that have been inserted into the web of the rail on each side of the joint. The opposite of an insulated joint, a bonded joint is designed to ensure the track circuit is not interrupted by the joint.

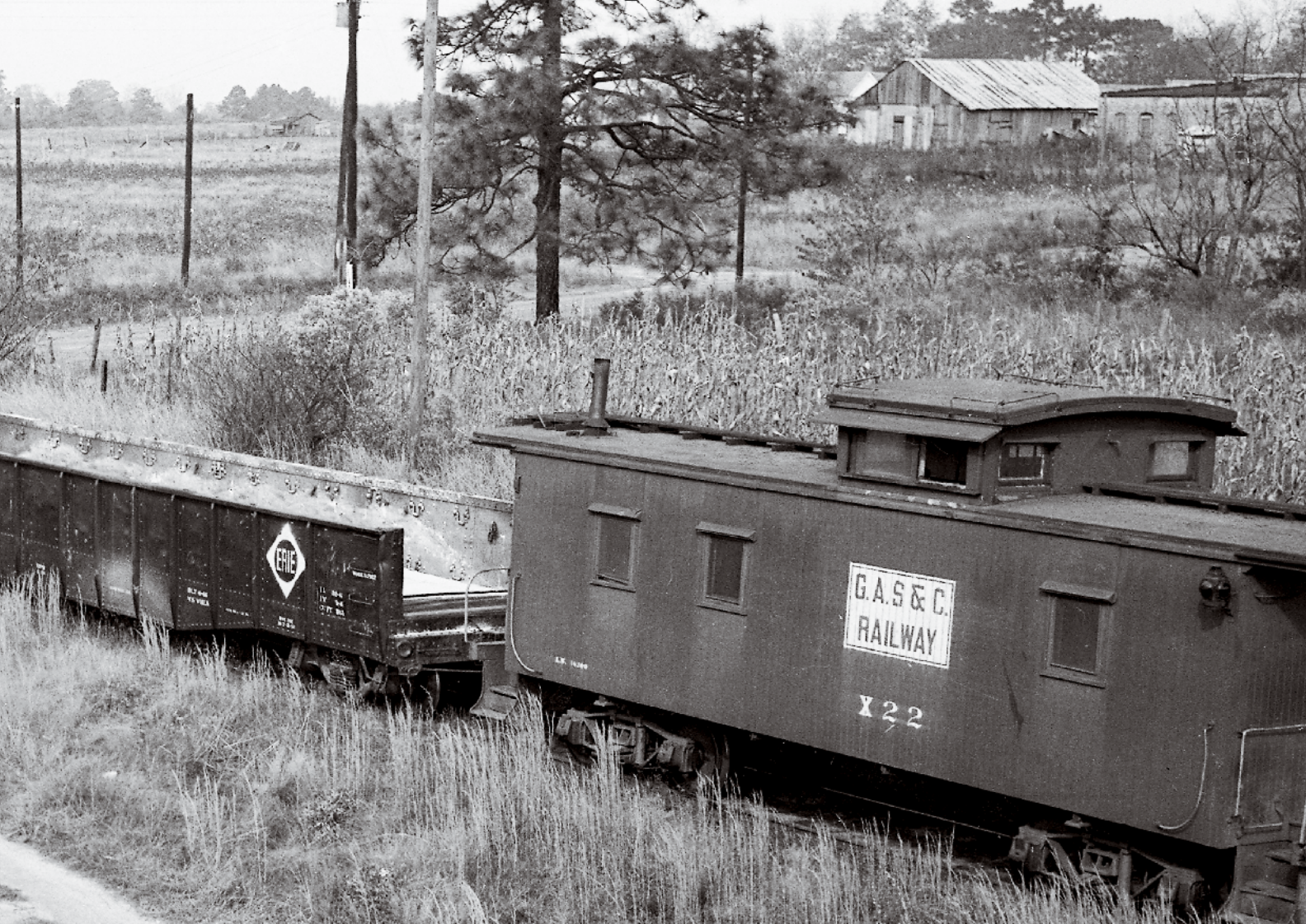


"Boogie time": We look northwest at Bridgeboro (above) in 1955. Georgia Northern SW8 801, with train 20 from Albany, has arrived to exchange cars with GAS&C train 11 from Ashburn, which, with General Electric 70-tonner 71 (opposite page, lower left), has pulled through the north leg of the wye and uncoupled its caboose (lower right). The stock car on No. 20 may be destined for the Swift plant at Moultrie.

THE "BRIDGEBORO BOOGIE"

A shortline interchange in south Georgia's
"Pidcock kingdom" had a brief life

By **Russell Tedder** • Photos from Sanborn Collection, Lakeland (Fla.) Public Library



Bridgeboro, a hamlet in Worth County, Ga., southeast of Albany, is about as far into the heart of the Deep South as you can get. Today it's situated on curves in both State Highway 112 (the road in the 1955 photo at top) and a lone railroad track operated by the Georgia & Florida, although when Bridgeboro had two railroads, neither was part the "classic era" Georgia & Florida (1906–1963) profiled in the Spring 2012 CLASSIC TRAINS "Fallen Flags Remembered." The closest the old G&F came to Bridgeboro was on a branch from

the east into Moultrie, Ga., 20 miles to the south. Moreover, Bridgeboro is unusual in that for more than 60 years, from the dawn of the 20th century into the mid-1960s, it was a shortline intersection, with neither line that crossed there being associated with a Class 1 until Southern Railway entered the picture in 1966.

Bridgeboro and its two short lines characterized the spirit of *Mixed Train Daily*, the classic book Lucius Beebe penned after visiting short lines across the United States at the end of World War II. Observed Beebe: "The Southern

Railway, traversing as it does a territory more opulent than any other in short lines, connects with no fewer than 57, all various, like the pickles, all operated independently and in patterns of their individual devising . . ."

As for Bridgeboro's railroads, Beebe noted that "the little kingdom of the Pidcock family of Georgia embraces three interlocking short lines of varying degrees of importance." Long-time readers of TRAINS magazine might remember the term "Pidcock lines," or that two of the three would wind up with hand-me-



Its interchange work done, GAS&C 11 has backed through the wye onto its line. After pausing at the joint (with Georgia Northern) fuel facility (top), it crosses the diamond, passes the depot (closed before 1951), and rolls south. Cars for Southern at Ashburn will be fetched on the return.

down Southern FT diesels [page 65], or possibly the article in *TRAINS'* April 1969 issue, "When It's Shortline Time Down South," by the late Jim Boyd.

The "Pidcock kingdom" included the Georgia, Ashburn, Sylvestor & Camilla Railway, which connected with the main line of Southern Railway subsidiary Georgia Southern & Florida at Ashburn, Ga. The GAS&C became known variously as the "Gas Line" or "the Camilla."

But GAS&C was a junior in the Pidcock family, joining the system in 1922. The Pidcocks' "flagship" was the 68-mile Georgia Northern Railway, acquired November 3, 1894. The family's third road was the Albany & Northern, running 35

miles northeast from Albany to Cordele. Completed in 1891, A&N went through several leases, names, and reorganizations before coming under Pidcock control in 1939 and resuming the A&N name in 1942. The Pidcocks abandoned a fourth line, the Flint River & Northeastern, not long before Beebe's odyssey.

THE B&A OF GEORGIA

James N. Pidcock Sr. was a former congressman and builder and owner of the Rockaway Valley Railroad in New Jersey. His railroad interests in Georgia began in 1892, when he visited his son Charles, who was working as a lumber mill clerk at Boston, Ga., near the Flori-

da state line. The elder Pidcock shared his son's enthusiasm for the business potential in the yellow pine forests and the rich sandy soil in the rolling hills of south Georgia. Searching for a promising local venture, the father and son found a dormant railroad charter for the Boston & Albany Railroad of Georgia, which they acquired from a group of Boston (Ga.) businessmen. Like its big namesake linking New England's hub city with New York's state capital, the B&A of Georgia was projected to run between the Peach State towns of Boston and Albany (the latter, though, pronounced locally as All-BINN-ee).

Charter in hand, James and Charles Pidcock set out to build a railroad. At first, the B&A wasn't much of a line, just a typical logging track deep in the heart of south Georgia's timberlands, going north 12 miles from Pidcock (4½ miles east of Boston), serving on-line sawmills and turpentine stills. By 1893 it was 30 miles long, having reached Moultrie. Soon, though, the infant pike was thrown into receivership during the Panic of 1893. Although it appeared the little railroad was doomed, circumstances dictated its survival.

Rather than accepting defeat, the elder Pidcock and son Charles persuaded Charles' two brothers, James N. Jr., and John F., who still lived in New Jersey, to join them in a venture to save the B&A. Together, the family bought all B&A property at a receiver's sale on October 3, 1894. Perhaps sensing the confusion that could result from keeping the same name as the big B&A up north, the Pidcocks on November 3, 1894, surrendered the old charter and got a new one in the name of Georgia Northern Railway Co.

Over the years, J. N. Pidcock and sons developed the Georgia Northern into a thriving line that served several towns up to Albany, reached on its own rails in 1905. (Georgia Northern had served Albany beginning in 1902 via 3 miles of trackage rights from Darrow on what became an Atlantic Coast Line route.) Also in 1905, the ACL connection at Pidcock was moved to Boston.

The Pidcocks soon established an industrial development program in Georgia Northern's rich timber and agricultural area, an integral part of which was the Whitehouse Land Co., which they formed in 1895 to buy, sell, and develop timberland as a traffic source for shipping on their railroad. As the timber was cut and the fertile land left idle, the Pidcocks joined with others in promoting

and developing agriculture and other industries. Georgia Northern continued industrial development until selling the railroad to Southern Railway in 1966.

James N. Pidcock Jr. took over the presidency from his father in 1897 and held it until 1906, when he stepped down in favor his co-founder brother Charles, who held the office for the next 30 years.

ADDING THE GAS&C

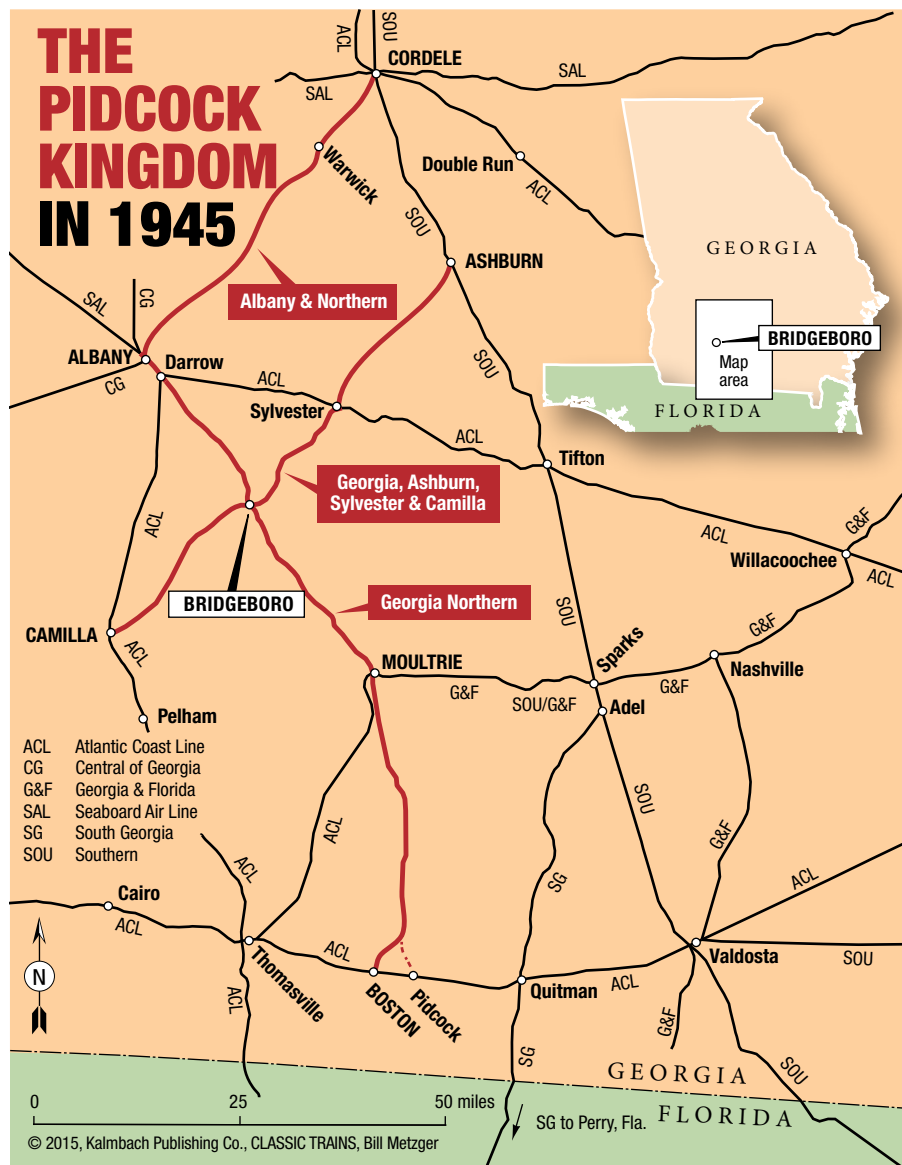
The Georgia, Ashburn, Sylvester & Camilla Railway Co. was born of the 96-mile Hawkinsville & Florida Southern, for which the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1922 authorized total abandonment. This anticipated loss was a matter of great concern to the Georgia Northern as well as to H&FS on-line business leaders and shippers. Together they and other citizens tried to persuade Charles Pidcock to buy and run the 51-mile H&FS segment between Ashburn and Camilla, which crossed the Georgia Northern at Bridgeboro.

Although sympathetic to their cause, President Pidcock believed that any investment he might make would need financial help and the full support of on-line interests, who formed a citizens committee. Accordingly, he asked them to put up one-half the necessary working capital as evidence of their support. Negotiations resulted in the organization of GAS&C, with more than 200 shippers and citizens owning half of the stock. The new road then bought the H&FS segment from its receiver, and GAS&C started operations in June 1922. Part of the purchase pact was that the Pidcocks would manage and run GAS&C. Other economies were realized from joint use with Georgia Northern of locomotives, cars, other equipment, and facilities.

In 1936, Charles W. Pidcock Jr., grandson of Georgia Northern founder James N. Pidcock Sr., succeeded his father as president of the three family short lines. He served in that capacity until his death in 1961, after which W. Leon Pippin Jr., his son-in-law, took over as president and general manager.

THE "BRIDGEBORO BOOGIE"

From its earliest days, the Georgia Northern had relied on its Class 1 connections — lines that became part of ACL at both Boston and Albany plus the Central of Georgia at Albany — for car supply as well as access to the national rail system. It was not until the 1950s, though, after Leon Pippin married into the family and became heir apparent to



All "boogied out," Georgia Northern 801 (built as EMD SW8 demonstrator 801) clears the GAS&C diamond and curves off into the piney woods, continuing on its way to Moultrie.



April 1956: The only Baldwin in the Pidcock kingdom, bought-new 660 h.p. No. 172, switches Swift Packing at Moultrie (top); GAS&C's little GE 70-tonner rambles along at Terrell (above).

Two photos, Jim Shaw

the Pidcocks, that management fully recognized the substantial benefits that could be derived from GAS&C's connection with the Georgia Southern & Florida (Southern Railway) at Ashburn.

Accordingly, Pippin started promoting routing to and from Georgia Northern points and GS&F via the familial GAS&C interchange at Bridgeboro. Not only did the Pidcock lines increase revenues, shippers at Albany and Moultrie benefitted from the additional outlet.

Soon the interchange at Bridgeboro — a tiny place described in print by Jim Boyd in 1969 as consisting of “a few houses, a combination gas station and general store, and one trackside industry” — became the focus of intense switching activity when the daily-except-Sunday locals on Georgia Northern and GAS&C would meet in the morning to exchange cars. The accompanying photos of that action, on pages 60–63, taken circa 1955 by the late Harold Sanborn of Lakeland, Fla., capture the drill.

The Pidcock Lines' 1950s strategy of promoting the Southern connection at Ashburn not only increased revenues for Georgia Northern and GAS&C, it also altered traffic patterns. One result was

the downgrading of the 28-mile Moultrie–Boston end of the Georgia Northern. While the ACL connection at Boston had been active in the past, after Georgia Northern discontinued the Moultrie–Boston passenger train in 1956 — employing self-propelled motor cars, which lingered on the property for years in typical shortline style — that 29-mile segment saw the Moultrie yard crew go down to Boston only when required.

ENTER THE SOUTHERN

In the early 1950s, Southern Railway Vice President, Operations, D. W. Brosnan, who later would become president, believed that some of his system's many shortline connections had value for industrial development purposes. Under this philosophy, Southern in 1954 purchased the Live Oak, Perry & Gulf and the South Georgia, two related Florida short lines that connected with each other at Perry, southeast of Tallahassee, and at Adel, Ga., with Southern's GS&F Macon–Jacksonville main line. Brosnan also had his eyes on the Pidcock Lines, particularly Georgia Northern, but the owners at that time had no interest in selling.

This changed in late 1963, when Leon

Pippin, the lines' president, approached the Southern about the possibility of selling out. This led to a series of negotiations and filings that culminated in the sale of Georgia Northern and GAS&C to Southern on July 1, 1966. (A&N had been sold in 1964.) Southern's policy was to have its shortline acquisitions operate independently, so although Brosnan was named chairman of the board of the Pidcock trio, the company continued local management by electing Pippin as president and general manager.

The acquisition negated the Pidcock lines' need for the Southern connection at Ashburn, so the “Bridgeboro Boogie” faded into history. Albany & Northern, by the late 1960s active only from Cordele 12 miles southwest to Warwick, was abandoned in 1977, and by 1990 Southern successor Norfolk Southern had abandoned all the former GAS&C plus the Georgia Northern south of Moultrie.

Conversely, after celebrating the 75th anniversary of rail service to Moultrie in February 1968 by steaming excursion 2-8-0 No. 630 on a three-day odyssey to Moultrie from Birmingham, Ala. — complete with GEORGIA NORTHERN and C. W. PIDCOCK lettering on her cab — Southern announced that the Albany–Moultrie line would be upgraded as part of a new through freight route.

EPILOGUE

Alas, the old Georgia Northern segment, from Albany through Bridgeboro to Moultrie (and extending east on the former G&F branch to Sparks), didn't last as a Class 1 freight route, although service has continued under a series of new shortline owners. In 1995 Norfolk Southern spun off the Albany–Moultrie–Sparks line, plus the old Georgia & Florida north from Valdosta, Ga., to Nashville, Ga., to shortline portfolio manager Gulf & Ohio, which began operations on April 14, 1995, using a name from yesteryear — Georgia & Florida.

On January 21, 1999, Gulf & Ohio consolidated its holdings in the region and sold them to another shortline company, North American RailNet, which renamed the carrier Georgia & Florida RailNet. Then in 2005, OmniTRAX acquired the operation from RailNet, renaming it Georgia & Florida Railway.

So some of the old “Pidcock kingdom” today remains as part of “what goes around comes around,” and if you happen by Bridgeboro, Ga., at the right time, you might see a train. But it won't stop to “boogie.” ■

PIDCOCK'S SHORTLINE TRIO IN FULL COLOR



Shortline style: Georgia Northern SW8 No. 13, ex-801, hauls a short freight at Albany, Ga., on May 28, 1967. Five photos this page, Keith E. Ardinger



Its paint scheme reflecting its Southern Railway origin, FT No. 14, re-numbered from 4105, rests at Albany. GAS&C also had an ex-SOU FT.



Fairbanks-Morse motor car No. 2, built as one of Southern's six, at Moultrie in March 1957, was still there in 1965! Stanley H. Mailer collection



Georgia Northern Brill motor car 55, also at Moultrie on March 27, 1957, likewise was on hand in 1965, in the shop. Stan Mailer collection



Sporting six exhaust stacks, Baldwin DS-44-660 No. 172 burbles to itself at Moultrie on November 21, 1965. It would become No. 12.



Albany & Northern's only unit, GE 70-tonner No 70, halts for a portrait at Albany on May 31, 1965. By 1967 it would have a new number — 1.



Formerly No. 71, Georgia, Ashburn, Sylvester & Camilla 70-tonner No. 15 sports fresh-looking paint at "off-line" Moultrie on May 28, 1967.

Last stop before WORLD

The hidden story behind photos of my grandfather running the new *Empire State Express*

By **Bill Graper** • Photos by Earl Graper

Frequently, things in plain view hold hidden stories. As I was growing up, there were framed photos in our home of my grandfather, Will Graper, a New York Central engineer in the cab of the 1941 streamlined *Empire State Express*.

From what's clearly seen, the photos tell a good tale. In the first, Will Graper, a smiling man at the top of his profession, leans out the locomotive window, proudly in charge of his newly upgraded train.

The second photo shows the *Empire's* streamlined J-3a Hudson pausing mo-

mentarily at Schenectady station, ready for the race across upstate New York on the Water Level Route. It's a homecoming for the 4-6-4, built along conventional lines in 1938 less than a mile away at Alco's Schenectady plant but now dressed up by NYC craftsmen with stainless-steel cowlings and a bullet nose in one of the more esthetically pleasing examples of steam streamlining.

But these pictures' hidden story may be even more dramatic. Shortly before he died, my father, Earl Graper, offhandedly indicated that he had taken the pictures

on the first day that the new *Empire State Express* went into service. (Will Graper was no stranger to new train premieres, having run the first westbound streamlined *20th Century Limited* in 1938. He finished his career as the *Empire's* engineer on the Central's Mohawk Division, between Albany and Syracuse.)

As many fans of railroad history are aware, the New York Central happened to pick Sunday, December 7, 1941, as the day to debut the new *Empire* — the same

Will Graper — a veteran engineer at the top of his profession — proudly stands in the cab of New York Central's streamlined *Empire State Express*.



WAR II

day the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor.

The *Empire* was scheduled to stop in Schenectady at 12:11 p.m., which would have been 6:41 a.m. local time in Hawaii. At that moment, Japanese bombers were approaching the island of Oahu to begin their attack. Thus, these were perhaps the last peacetime photos of the *Empire*, taken on the final occasion when the train's debut was expected to be the big story across New York State that Sunday. By the time the streamliner reached Utica (1:25 p.m.) the carnage at Pearl Harbor had begun, and the first radio announcements of the attack were made just before my grandfather brought the train into Syracuse at 2:19 p.m.

In the third photo (one I hadn't seen in print until recently), my grandfather looks back as his train eases out of the station. The *Empire State Express* was leaving the last stop before World War II. When it crossed the Erie Boulevard bridge and headed up the Mohawk Valley, it also left behind the last moments of peace when railroads like the Central touted shiny new trains to attract passengers. Ahead was a different world where the *Empire* and all passenger and freight trains would have serious new duties and capacity challenges in support of the war effort.

There's also one more hidden story in these pictures of my grandfather and "his" train. Will Graper was an immigrant from Germany, who left his home near Hanover at the start of the 20th century in part because of possible conscription into the Prussian army. Thus, the engineer who ran the westbound *Empire State Express* on the day when the United States became involved in World War II was a naturalized U.S. citizen who had left a country that was to be one of our primary adversaries.

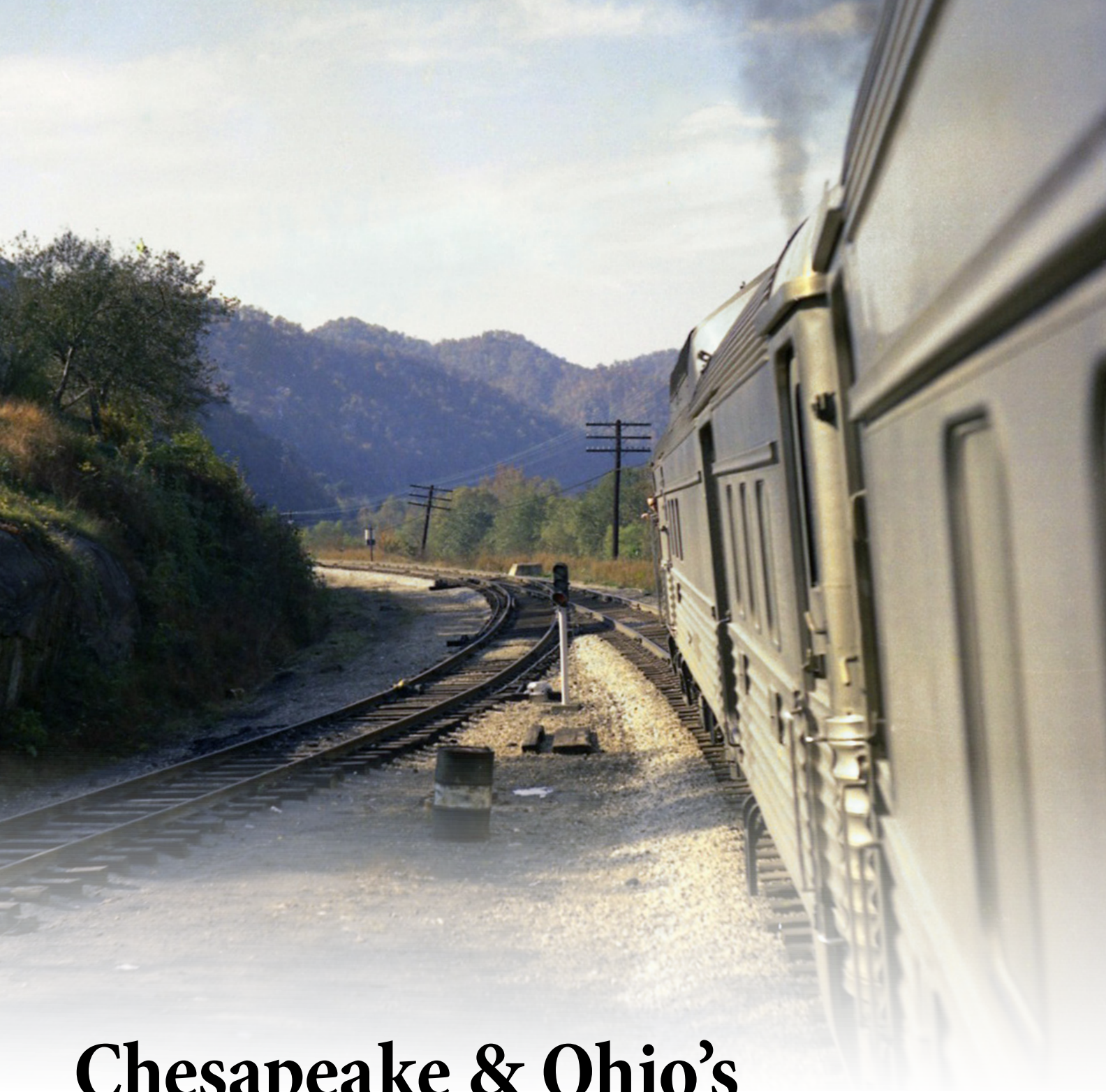
As I said, sometimes the hidden stories are as fascinating as the obvious tales that pictures portray. 📷



Graper's *Empire State Express* has paused at Schenectady, N.Y., during its first run between New York and Buffalo with new streamlined equipment. The date: Sunday, December 7, 1941.



Graper looks back as he eases the *Empire* away from Schenectady at 12:11 p.m. At this moment, some 5,000 miles to the west, Japanese warplanes are approaching Pearl Harbor.



Chesapeake & Ohio's **BIG SANDY BUDDS**

On riding unique RDCs into “the coal bin of America”

By **Larry K. Fellure** • Photos by the author



For about 6 years, until July 1963, two unique Rail Diesel Cars held down C&O's Big Sandy Subdivision trains 36 and 39, making a daily turn from Ashland to Elkhorn City, Ky. (above). The exact site of the on-board action shot (left), on No. 39 on October 30, 1960, was not recorded.

The Chesapeake & Ohio Railway was not only "George Washington's Railroad" but at heart a "coal road." And its Big Sandy Subdivision serving far eastern Kentucky — the "coal bin of America" — was perhaps the epitome of a big-time rail coal conveyor. A major thoroughfare of the Ashland Division that fed black diamonds to the world off its north end, C&O's Big Sandy ran south 128.2 miles from Big Sandy Junction in Catlettsburg, at Kentucky's northeast corner, to Elkhorn City, Ky., site of the Clinchfield Railroad connection at the Virginia border, climbing 250 feet in elevation along the way. The Big Sandy name — still in use today by CSX — came from the river, parallel to the east, that forms the Kentucky-West Virginia state line from the confluence of the Tug Fork and the Levisa Fork north until it empties into the Ohio River between Kenova, W.Va., and Catlettsburg.

Big Sandy freight trains used the Kanawha Subdivision main line from

the huge Russell (Ky.) yard east through Ashland to Big Sandy Junction. Big Sandy passenger trains originated at Ashland's multi-track depot that was the focal point for C&O varnish to and from Washington, D.C.; Newport News, Va.; Louisville, Ky.; Cincinnati; and Detroit. C&O train dispatchers who controlled the Big Sandy, and several other Kentucky lines, worked in offices in the Ashland passenger station.

Appalachia is full of colorful place names, and C&O's Big Sandy served its share. Employee timetables were chock full of coal-mine branches like Road Creek Spur, Lick Creek Spur, and Caney Creek Spur; of secondary lines such as the Elkhorn & Beaver Valley and Marrowbone subdivisions. The mines had colorful names, too: Antler, Kewanee, Tip Top, Glo Valley, Wolf Pit, Hi-Hat, and Rockhouse among them.

For decades, residents along C&O's Big Sandy depended on its trains as their only source of transportation and for mail and express deliveries. "The Sandy,"



"The three amigos" — from left, Bob Withers, author Larry Fellure, and Jim Kelly — pose by an RDC baggage door on July 9, 1961, the second of their three "group outings."



The Big Sandy Budds began their runs at C&O's big Ashland station (preserved today), where Alco S2 5018 switches cars in 1960.



Train 36 pauses at Louisa, Ky., on October 30, 1960. The express car behind the RDCs will be set off at Pikeville. With no mail and express work on Sundays, there was time to get off for photos at several places. Louisa's depot was lost in a fire caused by a gasoline-truck collision.

as locals called it, also had many colorfully named communities, such as Catalpa, Savage Branch, Zelda, Ben Bow, Bull Creek, Emma, and Broad Bottom. Some spots had passenger stations, but many had just modest shelters.

In the steam era, motive power ranged from 2-8-0 Consolidations to 2-8-4 Kanawhas on freights and 4-4-2 Atlantics and several classes of 4-6-2 Pacifics on passenger trains. The latter

handled mail and express cars, a Railway Post Office (RPO) car, baggage cars, and coaches, their exact consists and number of cars being dependent on traffic requirements.

A May 1945 timetable, when virtually every coal branch still offered its own passenger accommodations, shows two daily trains on what was then the Big Sandy Division (later Subdivision). No. 36 left Ashland at 6:30 a.m., arrived Elk-

horn City at 1:25 p.m., and after a one-hour layover, went back north as No. 39, arriving Ashland at 7:45 p.m. Nos. 37 and 38 were on the opposite schedule, leaving "Elkhorn" at 5:45 a.m. and arriving at Ashland at 10:55, with the return from 3:30 to 8:35 p.m. An April 29, 1934, employee timetable lists virtually the same times for those four trains, all designated as "second class."

After steam

While some Big Sandy freights were steam-powered into 1956, the passenger runs — down to only Nos. 36 and 39 — had been assigned new EMD E8 and FP7 diesels a few years before. By June 1958, though, passenger revenues had deteriorated, as they did everywhere, as citizens had taken to the paved roads and C&O had lost mail and express contracts. In response, C&O assigned two 1950 Budd-built Rail Diesel Cars to the Big Sandy. Now, C&O had acquired three other 1950 RDCs in 1957, Chicago & North Western's trio of two RDC1s (all-coach) and an RDC2 (coach and baggage) — in trade for three intercity coaches, but those were "normal" cars, *i.e.*, configured to haul mainly people.

The two acquired for the Big Sandy were RDC4s, a minority in the catalog. (For North America customers, Budd built 194 RDC1s, 56 RDC2s, and 42 coach-baggage-RPO RDC3s, against only 14 RDC4s, which had baggage space and an RPO but no passenger section. Budd also built 30 full coaches without operating controls, designated RDC9, for Boston & Maine.)



Typical of the views from the Big Sandy Budds is this in fall 1960 at BU Cabin, Milepost S54.



The aura of the Great Smoky Mountains, a subrange of the Appalachians, is well illustrated by this moody image of Elkhorn City-bound train 36 at Paintsville, Ky., on July 9, 1961. At 3,000-plus population, Paintsville, a county seat, was one of the larger towns on the Big Sandy.

Not only were the two Big Sandy Budds rare RDC4s, they had been modified by their original buyer with 18 coach seats each. That was Minneapolis & St. Louis, a granger very light on passengers but average on mail and express. M&StL tried hauling an express boxcar behind its RDC4s, a no-no according to the builder, so it swapped its two RDCs to C&O for 32 coal hopper cars and returned its GE motor cars (a.k.a. “doodle-bugs” and other monickers) as its passenger-train power. M&StL RDCs 32 and 33 became C&O 9080 and 9081, and ironically, C&O had them haul an express car too! C&O anticipated saving \$45,000 a year by introducing the Budd cars.

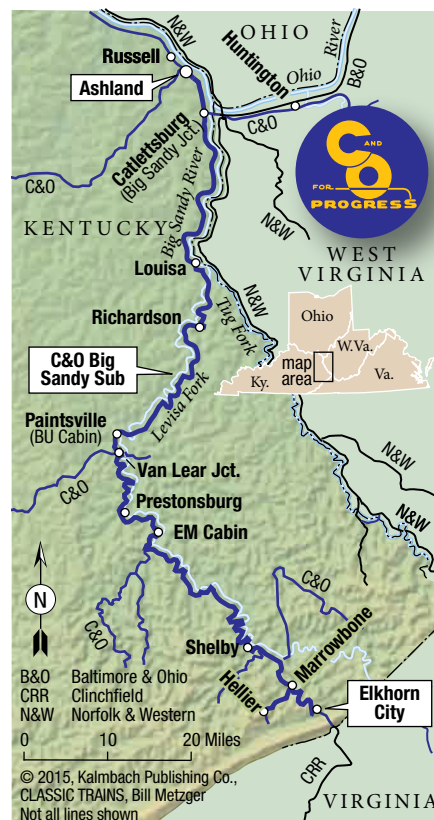
Introduced in 1949, the basic RDC was adapted from a standard 85-foot coach. It was powered by two Detroit Diesel (then a division of General Motors) series 110 V6 diesel bus engines, giving each RDC about 550 h.p. Each engine, mounted underneath the carbody, drove an axle through a hydraulic torque converter, giving enough power for an RDC to move itself, rather quickly, but lacking sufficient power to pulling addi-

tional cars, according to Budd (though obviously such was done). RDCs had a control cab at each end, and operated in multiple. The hump in the roof at the car’s center contained the exhaust stacks and cooling apparatus for the engines.

Getting the Big Sandy habit

In 1960 I lived in Huntington, W.Va., was active in the local Collis P. Huntington Railroad Historical Society (an NRHS chapter), and worked as a clerk in C&O’s Huntington Division superintendent’s office. Huntington is more or less contiguous with communities in two states west through Russell, Ky., so the Big Sandy was in our backyard. I and several other Society members and friends took the first of three rides as a group on the RDCs on October 30, 1960. The schedules of trains 36 and 39, the daytime turn, had barely changed, so it was a natural one-day outing.

No. 36 departed Ashland at 6:45 a.m. and arrived Elkhorn City at 1:43 p.m., taking almost 7 hours for the total distance of 149.7 miles. Why the extra mileage? Because the southbound run in-





The RDCs patiently wait at EM Cabin, Milepost S80.1 (from Big Sandy Junction), for a freight led by F units to take siding on March 18, 1962.



Set off in the morning by train 36, the express car at Shelby, reloaded while the Budds were down to Elkhorn City and back, is picked up on the return by 39 on the October 30, 1960, trip.

cluded a 16-mile round trip on the scenic — albeit economically depressed — Marrowbone Subdivision between Marrowbone and Hellier as trains 56 and 55. The practice dated from decades before. You would never know it from the schedule, but the Budds actually sprinted along at 72 mph on occasion.

Returning to Ashland, 39 departed Elkhorn City at 1:58 and arrived Ashland at 6:46 p.m., consuming 4 hours 48 minutes — 2 hours 10 minutes less than the southbound run because of no side trip. The southbound schedule also was lengthened by additional station time owing to more mail and express work.

Thus the total time on the road was 12 hours and 1 minute, easily handled by a single crew since at the time, the federal Hours of Service Law allowed train and engine service employees to work 16 hours at a time.



Group photos at Elkhorn City (from left): On July 9, 1961 (above): Front row: Conductor W. E. Bugg, engineer D. S. Baals, and two other crewmen; second row: Harlan Odell, Jack Waldeck, Larry Fellure (rear), Mary Waldeck, Jim Kelly, and Ernestine Odell; at the door: Ronnie Odell and Bob Withers. On March 18, 1962 (right), Odell and Fellure sit on the rails; above them are Charles Kime, a crewman, Mal Henderson, Waldeck, Bill Tully, Bugg, and Dick Moore (his son in front); in the door: Baals, Withers, assistant engineer Lockwood.



Casts of characters

On these outings, we made good friends with the regular crew, engineer D. Stewart Baals and conductor W. E. Bugg. They ran the trains every other Sunday, so our rides were coordinated to match with their schedule. Sunday was the best day to ride anyway, as the train had fewer regular riders and no postal clerks. We were given complete control of our domain, from cab to cab! On the first trip I used my company pass, but on the following two, conductor Bugg just let me ride, though I had my pass on me.

We had so much fun on that 1960 trip that we made another one on July 9, 1961. Later, in early 1962, the word was out that the Ashland-Elkhorn passenger trains would be discontinued, so we made a third jaunt on March 18.

These three trips were enjoyed by a varying guest list. I was joined on the October 1960 outing by Jack and Mary Waldeck; Harlan and Ernestine Odell and their son, Ronnie; and 15-year-old Bob Withers (known as "Bobby"), who would become a well-known railroad historian and prolific railroad author. In 1961, the seven of us were joined by Jim Kelly, a railfan from Philippi, W.Va. On the March 1962 outing, Bob Withers and



Engineer Stewart Baals has the RDCs at track speed at 3:10 p.m. July 9, 1961, as No. 39 rolls homeward from Pikeville. Next stop: Prestonsburg. The Budds would sprint along in some places at up to 72 mph.



CHESAPEAKE AND OHIO RAILWAY					
DATE <i>August 1961</i>					
← EASTBOUND TRAINS					
NO.	FROM	TO	DUE	REPORTED	LEAVE
36	Ashland	ELKHORN CITY	1215 PM		
	Marrowbone	Sub Division			
56	Marrowbone	Hellier	1217 PM		
WESTBOUND TRAINS →					
NO.	FROM	TO	DUE	REPORTED	LEAVE
37	ELKHORN CITY	Ashland	211 PM		
55	Hellier	Marrowbone	113 PM		



The 3.9-mile Marrowbone Sub saw the Budds make the trip up the hollow to Hellier as train 56, and back as 55, but only on the southbound trek of Big Sandy No. 36. On their July 7, 1961, outing, the author and Harlan Odell stayed behind at Marrowbone Junction to take photos.

I were joined by Jack Waldeck, Harlan Odell, Dick Moore, Charles Kime, Mal Henderson, and Bill Tully.

Operation on all three trips was fairly routine. Southbound, the train carried a loaded express car to Pikeville, where it was traded for the now-empty car set out the day before. We then set off that car at Shelby to be loaded, picking it up on our northbound return.

Moving about in those rolling Budds required some dexterity. Walking from the 18-seat passenger section into the baggage room was no problem, but going into the postal apartment was rough on the knees since you had to crawl through a tiny door under the sorting table in the postal section (a standard feature on RPOs, for security). Once into the RPO apartment, though, we could continue through a normal door into the cab.

As long as no one interfered with the crew's responsibilities and there were no personal injuries, the crew gave us free rein. One thrill was when we'd blow the horn on the trailing car in unison with the engineer in the lead car.

The C&O men showed their hospitality in many ways. On our 1960 trip, our train's departure was delayed 4 minutes because we were still buying our \$6.05 tickets in the Ashland station! The agent probably wasn't accustomed to selling so many fares for No. 36's departure. Later that day, Withers and Ronnie Odell shared throttle time as the train retreated down the hollow from Hellier. The next year, Harlan and I stayed at Marrowbone Junction to take photos while the train made the side trip. On the way back to Ashland, we were allowed to rummage through a pile of scrap at Shelby, saving several switch targets and marker lights from certain doom. In 1962, we moved extra chairs into the lead cab. Withers picked up a set of train orders on the fly at Shelby, threw a newspaper into a friendly family's yard, and pocketed a handful of sand from 9080's sand pipe (a souvenir is a souvenir, after all).

Since there were no mail or express deliveries on weekends, the schedule allowed plenty of time during station stops at several places for us to get off and take photos. After we stopped at Dunleary, just north of Elkhorn, we all fanned out into a field for photos to let freight train "Big Sandy 92" overtake us.

Bugg and Baals were typical old-time railroaders, gentlemen in every way. Baals lived on Bath Avenue in Ashland and Bugg, a widower, at Ashland's Ventura Hotel. Baals was a driving force

(pun intended) in his community. He tried to convince C&O to donate home-built streamlined Hudson No. 490 to Ashland for display in a city park, but the city declined to accept responsibility of maintaining a display locomotive.

Not only did the RDCs lack food service, there were no food facilities along the line, either. So on the first two outings, Ernestine and Mary prepared large picnic baskets for us and the crew! They loaded the baskets with sandwiches, salads, fried chicken, desserts, and more — we had enough leftovers to feed the other passengers, too.

Tales of the rails

Lest anyone get bored, engineer Baals enjoyed “bending the ear” of passengers on board his train. One of his stories I never will forget: In spring 1956, just before the demise of steam, Baals was engineer on a westbound freight powered by a 2700-series 2-8-4. He was bound for his home terminal of Russell, and before departing Elkhorn, he was told that this engine would be retired upon arrival in Russell. En route, Baals motioned to A. C. Broughton, his young fireman — who also was his fireman on our 1960 trip — to “move over here to my seat and take control of this ‘Big Mike.’” Baals then climbed up in the tender, dug out a comfortable hole in the coal pile, lay back, and relaxed with his hands supporting the back of his head. Broughton didn’t know what to make of this. Shouting over the roaring locomotive, he asked, “Mr. Baals, what are you doing?” Baals’ reply was poignant: “Just listenin’ to her, son,” he said. “Just listenin’.”

Baals also told one on his conductor with the unusual name. “Bugg had a brother who was a brakeman on the Sandy,” he said, “and when these two worked together in freight service, passing crews would watch for ‘those two bugs a-han-gin’ on the rear of the caboose.’”

Bugg, of course, had a few stories of his own. He told about a pregnant woman who flagged down the train at one of the many flag stops. She was on her way to a local hospital to deliver her baby. Several days later, there she was again — returning home with her new offspring.

On another trip our train encountered several goats that had broken out of their fence. One goat got too close to the track, and I never will forget the terrible thumping and bumping noises as we passed over that doomed animal.

Bugg also was generous. He gave me a genuine C&O conductor’s hat he had



End of the line: Train 36 approaches Elkhorn City (top) in October 1960, and the RDCs pose at the depot (above), ready to leave as No. 39 for Ashland. Two more group outings would occur.

purchased from his uniform allotment with “W. E. Bugg” stamped on the inside.

The final run of Nos. 36 and 39 took place on Sunday, July 14, 1963, so the RDC era on the Sandy did not last long. C&O had bought a sixth RDC in June 1962, the Katy’s only such Budd, an RDC3. It was sold to Canadian National as D356 in August 1965, while the three off C&NW wound up on C&O’s post-1963 ally Baltimore & Ohio. The Big Sandy pair went to materials-testing firm Krautkramer Ultrasonics. Baals and

Bugg retired soon after the last run.

Needless to say, our small group from Huntington formed lasting and unforgettable friendships with two outstanding railroaders, creating many memories. Being a C&O Huntington employee during those years, I took advantage of any opportunity to ride the Big Sandy. It’s been more than 50 years since that last RDC run, yet the memories of the rides and the gentlemen who served railroading with honor are with me today as if they just had taken place. ■

Keepers of Kentucky rail heritage

Local equipment highlights the Kentucky Railway Museum's collection • By Charles Buccola



A motor car from Kentucky short line Frankfort & Cincinnati dominates a 2014 view of KRM's grounds at New Haven; shop and depot are beyond.

Charles Buccola

Monon BL2 No. 32, which Dave Ingles rode behind in 1975 [Monon Moments," page 32], continues to be operated occasionally at the Kentucky Railway Museum. During the 1970s and into 1980 the rare diesel pulled numerous KRM-sponsored excursion trains on former Louisville & Nashville and Monon lines radiating from Louisville. Destinations included Owensboro, Lexington, and Bardstown, Ky.; Bloomington, Ind.; and Cincinnati

Reds baseball games. "We had lots of fun with the BL2," recalls Joe Bratcher, longtime volunteer and engineer with KRM.

When KRM acquired the BL2 in 1972, it joined two dozen pieces of historic equipment at KRM's River Road site in Louisville. The Kentucky Railway Museum, chartered in 1954, was opened to the public in 1958 at this site with three pieces of equipment — L&N Pacific 152, L&N combine 665, and a Monon caboose. Flooding from the adjacent Ohio River and the need for more space as its collection grew led KRM to move from that site to a larger county-owned property in suburban Louisville in 1977.

A dozen years later, the county government notified KRM its lease would not be renewed, and museum officers searched for a new site. Coincidentally, CSX Transportation was in the process of abandoning most of the former L&N Lebanon Branch. KRM purchased 17 miles of this historic line because it provided the capability to operate trains. Having successfully run excursions with the BL2 and later with L&N 152, KRM saw itself as an operating museum. The

excursions provided enjoyment to museum members and the public, and ticket sales were "very important" to financing KRM's early years, according to Bratcher and life member Carl Cruger. Thus in 1990 KRM relocated to its current home in New Haven, Ky., 48 miles south of Louisville, where it built a small yard, depot/gift shop, and locomotive/car shop.

Over the decades, various items of rolling stock have come and gone, resulting in the current collection of 90 pieces: locomotives, passenger and freight cars, cabooses, and maintenance-of-way equipment. KRM's first acquisition, L&N 152, continues to be its signature item. Restored to operable condition by volunteers, the 1905 Rogers 4-6-2 had pulled excursions throughout the Southeast during 1987–88, usually accompanied by Monon 32. After the museum relocated to New Haven, 152 ran on KRM's line on select dates each year. Having reached the time for its FRA-mandated 15-year overhaul in 2012, the light Pacific has been out of service since then. In January 2015, KRM kicked off a fund drive for 152's restoration, and disassembly



Santa Fe CF7 2546 often hauls KRM's excursion train. Although not native to Kentucky, the former F7 has worked 25 years for KRM.

Charles Buccola



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KRM's signature piece, L&N light Pacific 152, heads a train on the museum's ex-L&N branch line in September 2010. Now out of service, the engine is being evaluated for a third rebuild.

Charles Buccola

and evaluation have begun for her third rebuild in the hands of KRM.

KRM's other steam locomotives are L&N 2152 (a heavy 0-8-0); Chesapeake & Ohio 2-8-4 No. 2716 (leased to Southern Railway for excursion duty in 1981-82); and a narrow-gauge 0-4-0T industrial engine. (The only other extant L&N

steamer, 0-8-0 2132, is soon to be moved from Bainbridge, Ga., to Corbin, Ky.)

The BL2 operates only occasionally, its age and some unique components making it prudent to limit its duties. The majority of KRM's trains are powered by former Reading GP7 615 or a Santa Fe CF7. Switching is handled by a GE

44-tonner. KRM's most significant diesel, L&N E6 No. 770 — one of only five surviving early slant-nose E units — is on static display. A variety of passenger cars, from coaches to an L&N office car, serve on the excursion train or are in the queue for restoration. Trains run April through December on weekends; the standard trip covers the 11 miles from New Haven north to Boston. Some trains, like those during high-volume special events such as Thomas the Tank Engine, run east from New Haven about 5 miles.

Aside from the work on 152 and on-going refurbishment of passenger cars, KRM Executive Director Greg Mathews lists other key projects: New wheels for Frankfort & Cincinnati motor car M55-1 (Brill, 1927) so it can operate again, funding for the renovation of L&N tavern-lounge *Kentucky Club*, and the installation of an ex-Big Four turntable, which Mathews expects to be done by mid-2016.

KRM celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2014 and looks forward to bringing railroad history to life for decades to come. For more information, visit the museum's website, kyrail.org. ■

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An afternoon with Milwaukee steam

Pacifics and Hudsons still held down Chicago commuter assignments on the orange-and-maroon road in 1954



Pacifics 808 and 193 simmer at the Milwaukee Road's Western Avenue yard in Chicago prior to the start of the afternoon commuter rush.

Ron Chandler

I was 16 years old in summer 1954. TRAINS magazine had just published a welcome and revealing article in its August issue titled, "Steam: Where to Find It in 1954." There wasn't much of a railfan information network then. If you weren't familiar with a particular railroad and wanted to photograph certain types of its engines, you just had to pack up your camera and get yourself to a terminal on the road (if you even knew where one was located) and hope you might find what you were looking for.

It was a chancy thing in those days in the early 1950s, when dieselization was happening so fast. Someone might have reported having seen steam at a particular location, and when you arrived a couple of months later, you might find nothing but diesels. So the TRAINS article was not only a godsend to those of us anxious to photograph steam, but it came just in the nick of time with regard to some railroads that were on the edge of total dieselization.

Shortly after the article came out we made our annual visit to my Aunt Esther in Chicago. The article had given me sev-

eral ideas of places I might visit while in the Windy City. One that seemed especially promising was the Milwaukee Road at its Western Avenue yard near downtown. The article claimed that a large part of the Milwaukee's commuter-train fleet was still powered by 4-6-2s and 4-6-4s. These were engines with which I was completely unfamiliar, and I decided that I would spend one of the days of our visit getting whatever I could of these engines on film.

I decided the only way to go about this mission was to follow proper procedures. The very first day after our arrival at my aunt's apartment in the city's Avondale neighborhood, I dragged the monstrous Chicago telephone directory off the phone table and found a number for the Milwaukee's headquarters in Union Station. After getting past the receptionist and someone at the next level of the bureaucracy, I got to talk to a superintendent of something-or-other.

I explained my mission to him — telling him of my desire to see and photograph as many steam locomotives as I could while they were still operating. He

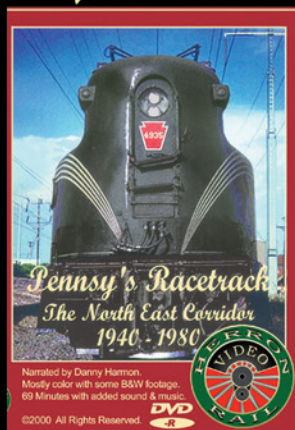
was amazingly sympathetic. His first question was, "When would you like to visit Western Avenue?" I asked if it would be possible to come that same afternoon. He told me to come to such-and-such room on the third floor of Union Station and ask for Mr. So-and-so.

A ride on a C&NW Northwest Line suburban train and a short walk from North Western Station to Union Station brought me to the appointed meeting place with the official in charge. He quickly telephoned someone in authority at Western Avenue.

"A blond, teen-aged young man will be getting off of one of our local trains shortly and will walk into your shop on the gravel path," he explained to whoever was the other end of the line. "Please be of any assistance that you can be to help him get pictures of some of our steam engines there."

Then the gentleman gave me very explicit instructions on what I would and would not be allowed to do when I got to the yard. I was told that I would be given a pair of safety goggles that I had to wear during my entire stay there. I was not to

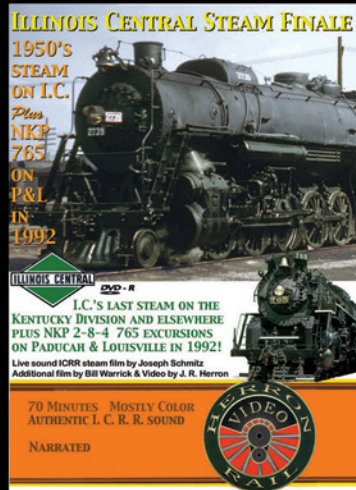
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In the next issue

Winter 2015 Edition



Hudson Valley Hot Spot

Oscawanna, N.Y., on the New York Central's Hudson Division was a great place to savor 4-6-4s, Niagaras, and early diesels in 1952

B&O's Western Outpost

The branch between Springfield and Beardstown, Ill., was an unlikely extremity of a great eastern trunk line

Rails in the Sunrise

Canada's Cape Breton Island, one of the easternmost points in North America, hosted Sydney & Louisburg steam operations until 1961

Before the J

Overshadowed by the superb class J 4-8-4s, Norfolk & Western's class K 4-8-2s were solid and long-lived

Diesel Demonstrators

Dave Ingles looks back on encounters with GE, EMD, and Alco sales ambassadors during the 1960s

Herding the Goats

In the waning days of SP steam, a young fireman with visions of mainline glory often had to settle for duty on lowly yard engines

Fallen Flags Remembered

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THE WAY IT WAS

climb onto any engines or equipment, I was not to enter any shop buildings, I was not to cross any track within 30 feet of any standing equipment, and I was not to stand within 10 feet of any track when taking photos. Amazingly, even though I was clearly a minor, I was not asked anything about parental permission, nor was anything said about any kind of release form.

I left the office and descended to Union Station's grand concourse to catch the next available commuter train to Western Avenue, the first stop out. As many times as I had been in Union Station, I had always entered from the south end on a Burlington train. I had never had occasion to be in the north end, which was used exclusively by the Milwaukee.

Walking into that north end was, for me, being accustomed to the variety of CB&Q, Pennsy, and Gulf, Mobile & Ohio trains on the south end, a visual shock. The first impression was of an overwhelming amount of orange and maroon! The only other place I had ever encountered such total color consistency was at North Western Station, which was filled with C&NW yellow and green, plus a smattering of Union Pacific yellow.

I got on a commuter train pulled by an Alco road-switcher and we bumbled off on the short ride to Western Avenue. As I detrained, the conductor pointed out the gravel footpath that would take me into the shop complex.

My excitement rose when I saw coal smoke and heard steam engine noises as I approached the facility. I was more than thrilled as I walked into the engine servicing area and saw two dozen or more 4-6-2s and some 4-6-4s steamed up and ready for the afternoon commuter rush. I walked into the yard office, introduced myself, and received a pair of safety goggles. The safety regulations were recited to me again and was told I was free to look at and photograph whatever interested me.

What a thrilling afternoon that was! Virtually every engine in the area was a steamer. The only exceptions were a few downgraded Fairbanks-Morse "Erie-built" diesels that had been relegated to the Chicago commuter pool.

I felt like I was in some sort of time warp. I had gone back in history about 20 years (except for the few FMs), and lost all perception of the passage of time. When I finally realized how late it had gotten and how long I had been wander-

ing among these steam dinosaurs, I had to hustle to turn in my goggles, rush down the gravel path, and catch a train back downtown.

On my arrival in Union Station, I was again plunged into the orange-and-maroon world with which I had only that day become acquainted. I lingered for a while to watch these colorful trains come and go. Then, reluctantly, I walked the short distance north to the yellow-and-green world of North Western Station for the return ride to my aunt's apartment.

Within a few months, the Milwaukee was dieselized. In fall 1955, following the shift of Union Pacific's trains from the C&NW to the Milwaukee east of Omaha, UP yellow began diluting the color at Union Station's north end, later replacing the familiar orange and maroon altogether. Little could any of us then have imagined that the Milwaukee itself would eventually disappear. I can only be thankful to those kind officials who allowed me to walk so freely around the Western Avenue yard more than 60 years ago and record on film a little bit of railroad history. — Ron Chandler



Milwaukee 4-6-4 No. 126 and a Fairbanks-Morse "Erie-built" diesel stand at Western Avenue station, awaiting clearance from Tower A-2 to back down to their trains at Union Station.

Ron Chandler

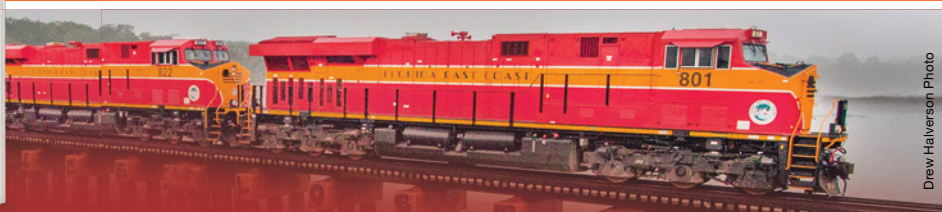
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P25382

Rat Hole railroading

A former road foreman of engines remembers the early 1970s on the Southern's busy CNO&TP main line

Turn the clock back to the early 1970s. The railroad is the Cincinnati, New Orleans & Texas Pacific, the Southern Railway's subsidiary south from Cincinnati. The place: Danville, Ky., a division point at the north end of the Middle District of the Cincinnati Division. The Middle, or 2nd, District, was a high-speed, high-density operation 134 miles between terminals at Danville and Oakdale, Tenn., through the mountains of Kentucky and Tennessee.

Once, this district had 24 tunnels and was known as the "Rat Hole," but by 1970 only two tunnels remained after the Southern's miracle job of making this a super railroad, complete with line changes, daylighted tunnels, and rebuilding of the two remaining bores to accommodate catenary if the future required it.

This division was like the trunk of a tree. It lived on overhead traffic, taking trains from the industrial states of Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana through the Cincinnati gateway. These trains ran down the 2nd District, where they were directed to Knoxville, Chattanooga, and the automobile-assembly plants around Atlanta. It was imperative to keep the loads moving south and the empties moving north so they could be reloaded and start the cycle again. As a young road foreman of engines on the 2nd District, I bore some of this responsibility.

All arranged freight trains appeared as Second Class Trains in the employee timetable, and most of our trains had names. Station times were given at end-point terminals, and the operation didn't deviate significantly from the timetable.

The southbound auto-parts hotshot was No. 151; you could literally set your watch by this train's performance. It was named the *Sparkplug*, but we referred to it simply as "The Plug." It ran as a "radio train" with a mid-train locomotive controlled by the engineer on the head end that helped maintain air pressure in the long trainline and made operation on the ruling grades reliable by reducing the drawbar stress.

The Plug was a "step-on" job, which meant it did not stop to change crews at Danville or Oakdale. The procedure was to slow the train to a crawl with the extended-range dynamic brake and swap



"Railroading at the height of perfection": *Sparkplug* 151 (left) meets a northbound at Whitely, Ky., 2 miles north of Stearns on Southern's hot CNO&TP "Rat Hole" line, on August 12, 1974.

Ron Flanary

crew members when moving along the station platform. It was not uncommon for the trainmaster to drive the caboose crew back a train length north of the depot; this way, the head-end and rear-end crews could be swapped more or less simultaneously and the train would be on its way sooner.

Next came 229, a solid train of 89-foot piggyback flatcars (the word "intermodal" was essentially unknown then). No. 229 was named the *Piggyback Special* but called "The Swine." When business was good, this train could exceed 9,000 feet or run in sections. Nothing was hotter. The dispatcher at Somerset couldn't take the chance of running a northbound train in the same county against 229 as it charged south.

The pressure to perform was intense. A ride on a long, heavy 229 to ensure that it kept its schedule was an education in cooperation. It took everyone to make it happen: the train dispatcher, yardmaster, engineman, and the conductor. The conductor played a key role by using his radio to let us know the condition of the slack at the rear. He would click his microphone button once when the slack was in and twice when it came out. This helped a great deal in coaxing an 85-car piggyback train through the dips at Coon Hollow and Patton Tank, Ky., in one piece and at higher speeds than would otherwise be possible.

We had two trains that used a mixture of Southern and foreign power: the Penn Central Run-Thru and the B&O

Run-Thru. Both of these followed 151 and 229 south around 1 p.m. as the third and fourth trains after noon, making Danville a busy place at midday. These four trains, going south, all met their counterparts coming north on the Middle District, running to make per-diem at Cincinnati before midnight. This made the second-trick dispatcher at Somerset an old man before his time trying to keep the railroad fluid after 229 had cut a wide swath across the division. Other named freight trains traversed the 2nd District at night: the *Chattanooga Clipper* out of Cincinnati, *Knoxville Clipper* out of St. Louis, and the *Monon* out of Louisville.

The trains that got the empties north to make loads for these southbounds had names too. The first train north in the morning was 350; it handled only empty auto-parts cars for Cincinnati and beyond. This train was called the "Rabbit" and was followed immediately by No. 150, another empty auto-parts train known as the "Beagle." (As anyone with a dog knows, a beagle always chases a rabbit.)

These two trains were always trouble because they were over-tonnage even though they were predominately empty. Why? In its infinite wisdom, the Southern Railway Control Center in Atlanta at the time assigned every empty car on the system a tonnage of 23 tons. These trains handled auto-parts boxcars that were 86 and 90 feet long with an empty weight of more than twice that. It didn't take many

of these to test the strength of head-end knuckles on hard pulls at 11 mph even though the paper tonnage for the train consist was within the rating of the locomotives. The more of these big cars proportionally to standard 40-foot boxcars we had in the consist the worse the problem became. Mr. Goldston, the system general road foreman of engines, gave us radio units for these trains. This helped considerably, but after three or four train separations on Big Lansing Hill in a week's time, Mr. Burwell, the general manager, would delegate six or eight road foremen to Oakdale to ride every train up the hill 24 hours a day. One time an episode of hill-riding lasted from Christmas 1972 into New Years 1973. This all was part of "Serving the South."

Even mine-run coal drags had names. The Tennessee Railroad at Oneida would furnish enough loads of steam coal for two trains to go south every 24 hours. Oneida was a station 45 miles north of Oakdale, and these trains were run as turn-around service out of Oakdale with five F units, which by this time were a little long in the tooth when compared to

the newer SD40s and SD45s on the time freights. The crews called these trains "Ol' Dolly" as a reference to the locomotives used in this service.

Getting a call for these trains was the most undesirable job on the division because they were called out of the away-from-home terminal in turn-around service. It meant that, instead of being called to go home, you were to spend 14 hours in service and be back at the bottom of the board at Oakdale when the assignment tied up. Most crews took the assignment with grumbles and complaints.

It was against the law of averages, but occasionally a crew would be first out for Ol' Dolly twice in a row. This resulted in open warfare, with men suddenly getting sick and marking off. Union agreements stated that after an engineer made three consecutive turns out of the away-from-home terminal, he would be first out to return to Danville. I never knew anyone who was so unfortunate to get the third call to Oneida . . . probably just as well, as the third call would have resulted in the roof being raised on the crew dormitory at Oakdale.

Enginemen had names too; we had an Airplane, Scrap Iron, Tack Head, Draw Bar, Radio, Flat Wheel, and a fellow who owned a dairy farm and drove a Divco milk truck to work, earning him the name Skimmer. These are easy to understand and stayed with a man his whole career. I was there to witness how one engineer acquired a nickname the hard way. He was backing five units north and put the rear unit over a derail and all over the ground, splitting open a fuel tank. From then on he was referred to as Northbound.

The 2nd District was a great place to be in 1970. Railroading was a serious business conducted at the height of perfection in the wake of the Brosnan Era on the Southern. Much was expected, but much was given in the way of tools. Maintenance standards for roadway and equipment were of the highest caliber. Rules were enforced but always consistent, so there was no doubt as to meaning or compliance. Most of the crews had hired out in the 1940s, so all were well-qualified and competent men, a constant pleasure to be around. — J. R. Morton

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THE WAY IT WAS



Northern Pacific's *Alaskan* roars east between Minneapolis and St. Paul in April 1949, 7 years after Bob Wood's 1942 stint as Third Cook on the transcontinental workhorse's café-coach.

John W. Malven

NP's popover pro

In 1942, the Third Cook on the *Alaskan* devised a breakfast specialty

As the nation was thrust into World War II, the railroads' business grew exponentially. Practically everything with flanged wheels was pressed into service to handle the burgeoning traffic. Military installations expanded and multiplied as the armed forces added men.

Anticipating that Uncle Sam's finger would soon be pointing at him, teenager Robert O. Wood bailed out of his last year of high school and signed on with the Northern Pacific's Dining Car Department in summer 1942.

Bob was anointed Third Cook. "The only reason I wasn't a Fourth Cook," he says, "was attributed to my skill (none at all), which became instantly apparent when I entered the kitchen."

He was assigned to a café-coach, substituting for the usual café car on NP trains 3 and 4, the *Alaskan*, which required nearly 2½ days to cover the 1,904 miles between St. Paul and Seattle. This secondary train featured coaches, tourist sleepers, and a 10-section/1-drawing-room/1-compartment Pullman between St. Paul and Fargo, N.Dak. Bob remembers the train running full. In addition to civilian passengers, it carried recruits to the Farragut Naval Training Station in Athol, Idaho, north of Coeur d'Alene.

In the heavyweight era, the NP ran a number of café-coaches on its tertiary trains. The top trains rated full diners, of course, but the road found the half-diner/half-coach cars to be adequate for relatively short runs.

The abbreviated facilities of the café-coach seated about a dozen, and Bob recalls that a typical meal attracted well over 40 diners. Crowded trains obliged

the crew to fill every chair, feeding the hungry masses in shifts. The normal offerings included 90-cent *table d'hôte* luncheons, one-dollar *table d'hôte* dinners, along with special plate luncheons and dinners at 65 cents. However, the crowding necessitated an abbreviated menu on the café-coach ("things like Chicken à la King — take it or leave it," Bob says), moving the crowds through in quickstep.

As soon as the diners could be pried from their chairs, the dishes would be collected, "and then it was my turn," Bob remembers. "Wash the dishes, scald them and put them right back on the table for the next shift." Cooks and waiters worked at a frenzied pace in the small dining compartment to get everyone fed before it was time for the next meal.

The NP's primary train, the *North Coast Limited*, carried a full diner requiring four cooks, four waiters, and the chief, a steward. The café-coach crew made do with two cooks, a waiter and the car's boss, a steward/waiter. And, although the *North Coast*'s crews rated space in a sleeper, the crews of Nos. 3 and 4 scraped along with less-than-plush accommodations. Bob recalls that a vestibule held mattresses and bedding. At night, the tables were folded down, mattresses laid out on the chairs and curtains hung. The cooks slept on one side, the waiters on the other. Given this nocturnal aisle-width separation of cooks (whites) and waiters (blacks), Bob says, "it sounds like Jim Crow was the order of the day, but color never reared its ugly head."

However, all was not rosy. The head cook occasionally indulged himself in an extended series of libations, resulting in a rather casual attitude toward his du-



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ties. And on those days, since he refused to make breakfast, that chore slid down to Bob. "We cooked on wood-fired ranges using compressed wood logs," he recalls. "When the train was making about 60 mph the draft was so good the stove almost glowed from the heat." Bob's specialty, indeed his only admitted venture into cooking, was breakfast popovers, which he whipped up with Bisquick. "The combination of the high heat and the Bisquick produced enormous popovers, not too well-done in the middle, but they were things of beauty."

So successful was this foray into mobile cookery that old ladies would appear at his elbow following breakfast, clamoring for his popover recipe. Hoping to keep his culinary prowess a mystery, he says, "I started by telling them it was a secret I couldn't divulge, but that just made them angry. So I switched to the truth, but that was even worse. Now [they thought] I was a liar."

The headlong pace of work in the café-coach and the passage of more than 70 years have blurred Bob's memories somewhat. One unforgettable event, however, occurred during a layover at Miles City, Mont. This was Bob's first venture out into the wider world. With no breakfast to serve (and no popovers to inflate), the cook suggested to Bob that he head across the tracks to the saloon for a beer. But, he reminded the cook, he was underage, only 18.

"Aw, hell," the cook snorted. "This is Montana. They don't care."

The philosophy prevalent among dispensers of intoxicating beverages in the West back then was that if you were tall enough to see over the top of the bar, you were old enough to drink. "So," Bob says, "I went over and ordered a ten-cent beer. It was the first beer I had ever had and they gave it to me with no problem."

At that time in Montana, the silver dollar was the coin of the realm. Hand a shopkeeper anywhere in the state a dollar bill and you would immediately be branded as a tourist. Flush with his Third Cook's wages, Bob had only a \$20 bill to pay for his beer. "I went out the door with \$19.90 in silver in my pocket, listing a little to one side."

Alas, this summer idyll lasted only about a half-dozen trips before Uncle Sam caught up with Bob, who left a budding career as a mobile culinary artiste to enter the U.S. Army. And he has not made a popover since. — *J. Stanley Rhine* 

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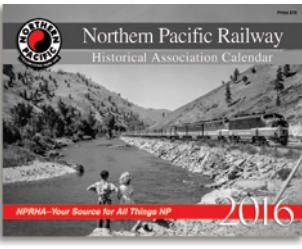
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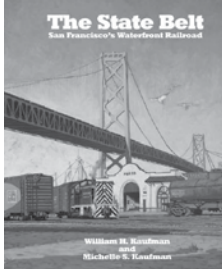


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1914. Municipal ownership and operation came in 1947 when the Chicago Transit Authority took over. CTA moved aggressively to convert trolley lines to buses, and the last electric streetcars ran on June 22, 1958.

Amid a riot of neon signs in the heart of the Loop (above), PCC 7153 (St. Louis, 1948) is southbound on Clark Street at Madison on a glorious summer 1957 day. At 683 units, Chicago's PCC fleet was the largest built for a single property; most were rebuilt as rapid-transit cars. Car 3151, a 1922 Brill (top right), is just starting an eastbound run on the 43rd-Root line as it crosses Halsted Street in a view from the

Halsted elevated ("L") station on the Stockyards Branch; the date is July 7, 1952, and bunting is hung for the first day of the Republican National Convention. Just over two blocks from its birthplace (middle right), car 689, one of the 600 101-series cars built by Pullman during 1908–09, is northbound on St. Lawrence Avenue in the South Side community of Pullman in April 1952; this is part of the Cottage Grove line, Chicago's first horsecar route. A snowy December 29, 1946, on the North Side (bottom right) finds a rebuilt 101-class car westbound on Belmont Avenue, about to pass under the Belmont "L" station, also used by the North Shore Line.



Clockwise from large photo, B. L. Stone, W. C. Janssen, George Krambles, R. V. Mehlenbeck; four photos, Krambles-Peterson Archive

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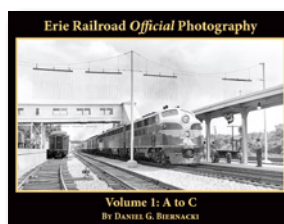
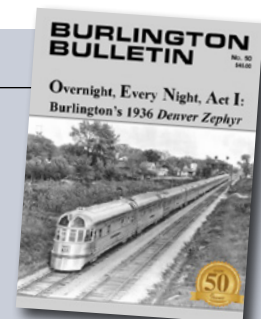
FIRST OUT

Burlington Bulletin No. 50:

Overnight, Every Night, Act I: Burlington's 1936 Denver Zephyr

By John W. Schultz. Burlington Route Historical Society, P.O. Box 456, La Grange, IL 60525; www.burlingtonroute.com; 8½ x 11 inches, perfect-bound, 147 pages; \$45 (free with BRHS \$30 yearly membership).

The Denver Zephyr was perhaps the most important member of CB&Q's Zephyr fleet, and this is an excellent, profusely illustrated study of its first 20 years. Coverage starts with the *Advance Denver Zephyr*, which used trains 9900 and 9903 for a few months to protect the Q's mail contract from being poached by UP's *City of Denver* while the 10-car *DZ* was being built. The nonstop Chicago-Denver speed run is included, as is the controversy caused by the *DZ*'s Budd-built sleeping cars, which led to the breakup of Pullman. A 1942 sabotage attempt is revealed. Changes to the original trains' consists and motive power before they were completely re-equipped in 1956, along with the subsequent assignments and ultimate fate of the 1936 cars, are included as well. We look forward to BRHS's "Act II" on the 1956 *DZ* and hope for even more from Zephyr authority Schultz. — *Robert S. McGonigal*



Erie Railroad Official Photography, Vol. 1: A to C

By Daniel G. Biernacki. Morning Sun Books, Inc., 9 Pheasant Dr., Scotch Plains, NJ 07076, www.morningsunbooks.com; electronic (digital) book, 381 pages; \$19.99.

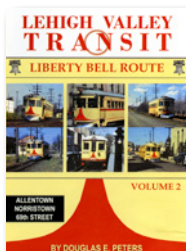
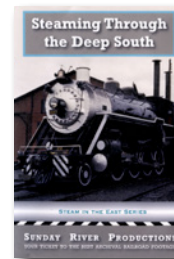
Morning Sun, synonymous for decades with all-color hard-cover books, is branching into black-and-white electronic books. This example presents nearly 400 b&w Erie Railroad images, most by John Long, who became the road's official photographer in 1945. Presented one to each on-screen page, the photos show rolling stock, structures, right-of-way scenes, employees at work, and more. Many are carefully composed publicity views; others are "record" shots; all are of high quality and are accompanied by informative captions.

The digital format allows one to enlarge the pages and search the entire document for items of interest. This is an invaluable trove for Erie fans and, as it is limited to places with names beginning with the letters A, B, and C, it only scratches the surface of the available material. — *R.S.M.*

Steaming through the Deep South

Sunday River Productions, (866) 544-7771, www.sundayriverproductions.com. DVD, 46 minutes; \$34.95.

The color films of Mac Owen provide an entertaining tour of eight regular-service steam operations in the 1960s South. On view here are Reader Railroad 2-6-2 No. 11 and 2-8-0 1702; Louisiana Long Leaf Lumber wood-burning 2-6-2 No. 7; ex-SP 0-6-0 842 working at a gravel company in Jenkins, La.; Mississippian 2-8-0 No. 76; Mobile & Gulf 2-6-0 No. 97; East Tennessee & Western North Carolina 2-8-0 207; North American Rayon Corp.'s fireless 0-6-0; and Graham County Railroad Shay 1925. Narration, dubbed train sounds, and music form the audio, while on-screen maps locate and describe each operation. — *R.S.M.*



Lehigh Valley Transit, Volume 2: Liberty Bell Route

John Pechulis Media, 129 Hemlock St., Sugar Notch, PA 18706; (570) 899-0656; www.johnpmedia.com. DVD, 67 minutes; \$30.

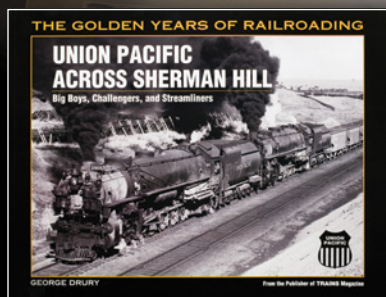
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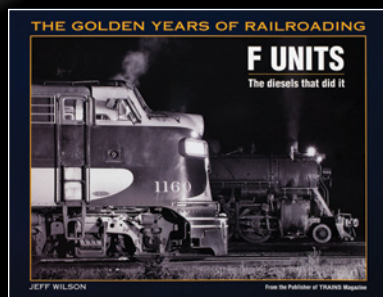
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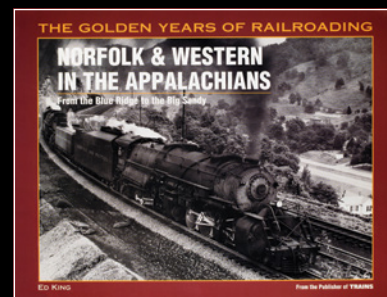
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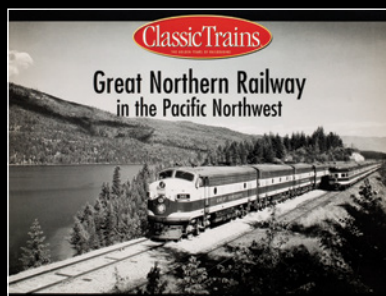
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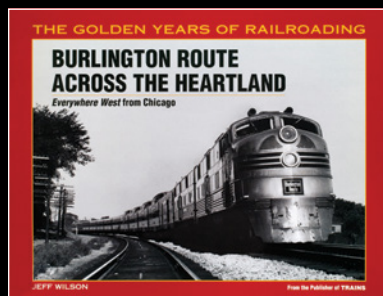
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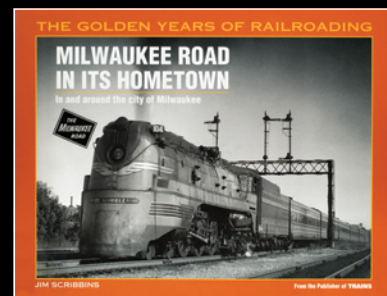
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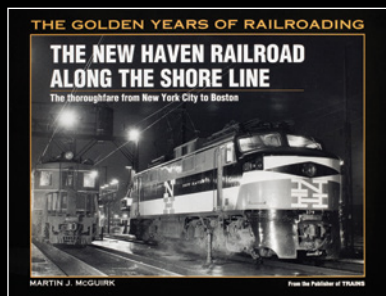
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Visit the East Broad Top Railroad's original southern operating terminus. Museum open first and third weekends, May through September, 10-5 Saturdays and 1-4 Sundays. Special hours in October.

www.febt.org 814-635-2388

TEXAS Grapevine

GRAPEVINE VINTAGE RAILROAD
 705 S. Main St.

Step back in time aboard the **Grapevine Vintage Railroad!** Featuring four enclosed circa 1925 passenger coaches, two circa 1927 open-air coaches, Engine 2248 - an 1896 steam engine - and a 1953 GP-7 diesel engine, this train is the perfect excursion for the entire family. Hop aboard for round trips from Grapevine's Cotton Belt Railroad Depot to Fort Worth's Historic Stockyards, as well as a series of special events throughout the year.

www.gvrr.com 817-410-3185

WISCONSIN Green Bay

NATIONAL RAILROAD MUSEUM
 2285 S. Broadway

All Aboard! Explore the UP Big Boy, Eisenhower's WWII command train, the exhibit Pullman Porters: From Service to Civil Rights, and our new exhibit entitled "From Generation to Generation: The Love of Toy Trains". View the Bauer Drumhead collection - 40 illuminated passenger train tail signs. Open year round.

www.nationalrrmuseum.org 920-437-7623

Where the Rock stood tallest

The 8,000-mile, 14-state Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific went a lot of places, but in hardly any major locale was it the dominant carrier. One of the few big cities where the Rock was top dog was Peoria, Ill. With a 1940 population of 105,000, Peoria ranked as the Prairie State's second-largest city, served by more than a dozen railroads. Typically among Peoria's carriers, CRI&P reached the city via a secondary main from Bureau to the north and a branch off the main line from Colona, Ill., to the northwest. The former was *the* way for Peorians to travel to Chicago. Accordingly, in 1891 Rock Island built a handsome station with an immense clock tower along the Illinois River. Structural problems obliged the road to remove the tower in 1939, shortly after this photo by railfan Paul H. Stringham, who ran the station newsstand for two decades. Rock Island trains stopped serving the old station in 1967, when the road opened a new depot/yard office a mile or so north. By the time the *Peoria Rocket* left the new station for the last time, on January 1, 1979, the downtown building had been vacant for some years. It was repurposed as a restaurant in 1981, a function it still serves today. 📷

Paul H. Stringham



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